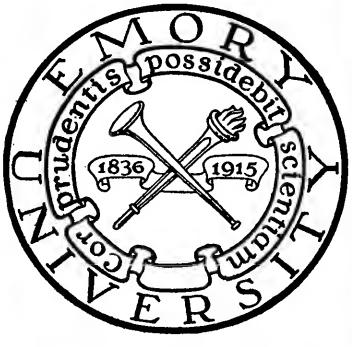
EMORY UNIVERSITY
LIBRARY



Purchased from the
funds of
The Lewis H. Beck Foundation

ENDYMION

VOL. I.

LONDON : PRINTED BY
SPOTTISWOODE AND CO., NEW-STREET SQUARE
AND PARLIAMENT STREET

ENDYMION

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"LOTHAIR"

"Quicquid agunt homines"

IN THREE VOLUMES

VOL. I.

LONDON
LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.
1880

All rights reserved

ENDYMION.

CHAPTER I.

It was a rich, warm night at the beginning of August, when a gentleman enveloped in a cloak, for he was in evening dress, emerged from a club-house at the top of St. James' Street, and descended that celebrated eminence. He had not proceeded more than half-way down the street when, encountering a friend, he stopped with some abruptness.

'I have been looking for you everywhere,' he said.

'What is it?'

'We can hardly talk about it here.'

'Shall we go to White's?'

'I have just left it, and, between ourselves, I would rather we should be more alone. 'Tis

as warm as noon. Let us cross the street and get into St. James' Place. That is always my idea of solitude.'

So they crossed the street, and, at the corner of St. James' Place, met several gentlemen who had just come out of Brookes' Club-house. These saluted the companions as they passed, and said, 'Capital account from Chiswick—Lord Howard says the chief will be in Downing Street on Monday.'

'It is of Chiswick that I am going to speak to you,' said the gentleman in the cloak, putting his arm in that of his companion as they walked on. 'What I am about to tell you is known only to three persons, and is the most sacred of secrets. Nothing but our friendship could authorise me to impart it to you.'

'I hope it is something to your advantage,' said his companion.

'Nothing of that sort; it is of yourself that I am thinking. Since our political estrangement, I have never had a contented moment. From Christ Church, until that unhappy paralytic stroke, which broke up a government,

that had lasted fifteen years, and might have continued fifteen more, we seemed always to have been working together. That we should again unite is my dearest wish. A crisis is at hand. I want you to use it to your advantage. Know then, that what they were just saying about Chiswick is moonshine. His case is hopeless, and it has been communicated to the King.'

'Hopeless!'

'Rely upon it; it came direct from the Cottage to my friend.'

'I thought he had a mission?' said his companion, with emotion; 'and men with missions do not disappear till they have fulfilled them.'

'But why did you think so? How often have I asked you for your grounds for such a conviction! There are none. The man of the age is clearly the Duke, the saviour of Europe, in the perfection of manhood, and with an iron constitution.'

'The salvation of Europe is the affair of a past generation,' said his companion. 'We

want something else now. The salvation of England should be the subject rather of our present thoughts.'

'England! why when were things more sound? Except the split among our own men, which will be now cured, there is not a cause of disquietude.'

'I have much,' said his friend.

'You never used to have any, Sidney. What extraordinary revelations can have been made to you during three months of office under a semi-Whig Ministry?'

'Your taunt is fair, though it pains me. And I confess to you that when I resolved to follow Canning and join his new allies, I had many a twinge. I was bred in the Tory camp; the Tories put me in Parliament and gave me office; I lived with them and liked them; we dined and voted together, and together pasquinaded our opponents. And yet, after Castlereagh's death, to whom like yourself I was much attached, I had great misgivings as to the position of our party, and the future of the country. I tried to drive them from my mind, and at last took refuge

in Canning, who seemed just the man appointed for an age of transition.'

'But a transition to what?'

'Well, his foreign policy was Liberal.'

'The same as the Duke's; the same as poor dear Castlereagh's. Nothing more unjust than the affected belief that there was any difference between them—a ruse of the Whigs to foster discord in our ranks. And as for domestic affairs, no one is stouter against Parliamentary Reform, while he is for the Church and no surrender, though he may make a harmless speech now and then, as many of us do, in favour of the Catholic claims.'

'Well, we will not now pursue this old controversy, my dear Ferrars, particularly if it be true, as you say, that Mr. Canning now lies upon his deathbed.'

'If! I tell you at this very moment it may be all over.'

'I am shaken to my very centre.'

'It is doubtless a great blow to you,' rejoined Mr. Ferrars, 'and I wish to alleviate it. That is why I was looking for you. The

King will, of course, send for the Duke, but I can tell you there will be a disposition to draw back our friends that left us, at least the younger ones of promise. If you are awake, there is no reason why you should not retain your office.'

'I am not so sure the King will send for the Duke.'

'It is certain.'

'Well,' said his companion musingly, 'it may be fancy, but I cannot resist the feeling that this country, and the world generally, are on the eve of a great change—and I do not think the Duke is the man for the epoch.'

'I see no reason why there should be any great change; certainly not in this country,' said Mr. Ferrars. 'Here we have changed everything that was required. Peel has settled the criminal law, and Huskisson the currency, and though I am prepared myself still further to reduce the duties on foreign imports, no one can deny that on this subject the Government is in advance of public opinion.'

'The whole affair rests on too contracted

a basis,' said his companion. 'We are habituated to its exclusiveness, and, no doubt, custom in England is a power; but let some event suddenly occur which makes a nation feel or think, and the whole thing might vanish like a dream.'

'What can happen? Such affairs as the Luddites do not occur twice in a century, and as for Spafields riots, they are impossible now with Peel's new police. The country is employed and prosperous, and were it not so, the landed interest would always keep things straight.'

'It is powerful, and has been powerful for a long time; but there are other interests besides the landed interest now.'

'Well, there is the colonial interest, and the shipping interest,' said Mr. Ferrars, 'and both of them thoroughly with us.'

'I was not thinking of them,' said his companion. 'It is the increase of population, and of a population not employed in the cultivation of the soil, and all the consequences of such circumstances, that were passing over my mind.'

'Don't you be too doctrinaire, my dear Sidney; you and I are practical men. We must deal with the existing, the urgent; and there is nothing more pressing at this moment than the formation of a new government. What I want is to see you a member of it.'

'Ah!' said his companion with a sigh, 'do you really think it so near as that?'

'Why, what have we been talking of all this time, my dear Sidney? Clear your head of all doubt, and, if possible, of all regrets; we must deal with facts, and we must deal with them to-morrow.'

'I still think he had a mission,' said Sidney with a sigh, 'if it were only to bring hope to a people.'

'Well, I do not see he could have done anything more,' said Mr. Ferrars, 'nor do I believe his government would have lasted during the session. However, I must now say good night, for I must look in at the Square. Think well of what I have said, and let me hear from you as soon as you can.'

CHAPTER II.

ZENOBIA was the queen of London, of fashion, and of the Tory party. When she was not holding high festivals, or attending them, she was always at home to her intimates, and as she deigned but rarely to honour the assemblies of others with her presence, she was generally at her evening post to receive the initiated. To be her uninvited guest under such circumstances proved at once that you had entered the highest circle of the social Paradise.

Zenobia was leaning back on a brilliant sofa, supported by many cushions, and a great personage, grey-headed and blue-ribboned, who was permitted to share the honours of the high place, was hanging on her animated and inspiring accents. An ambassador, in an armed chair which he had placed somewhat

before her, while he listened with apparent devotion to the oracle, now and then interposed a remark, polished and occasionally cynical. More remote, some dames of high degree were surrounded by a chosen band of rank and fashion and celebrity; and now and then was heard a silver laugh, and now and then was breathed a gentle sigh. Servants glided about the suite of summer chambers, occasionally with sherbets and ices, and sometimes a lady entered and saluted Zenobia, and then retreated to the general group, and sometimes a gentleman entered, and pressed the hand of Zenobia to his lips, and then vanished into air.

'What I want you to see,' said Zenobia, 'is that reaction is the law of life, and that we are on the eve of a great reaction. Since Lord Castlereagh's death we have had five years of revolution—nothing but change, and every change has been disastrous. Abroad we are in league with all the conspirators of the Continent, and if there were a general war we should not have an ally; at home our trade, I am told, is quite ruined, and we are

deluged with foreign articles; while, thank to Mr. Huskisson, the country banks, which enabled Mr. Pitt to carry on the war and saved England, are all broken. There was one thing, of which I thought we should always be proud, and that was our laws and their administration; but now our most sacred enactments are questioned, and people are told to call out for the reform of our courts of judicature, which used to be the glory of the land. This cannot last. I see, indeed, many signs of national disgust; people would have borne a great deal from poor Lord Liverpool—for they knew he was a good man, though I always thought a weak one; but when it was found that this boasted Liberalism only meant letting the Whigs into office—who, if they had always been in office, would have made us the slaves of Bonaparte—their eyes were opened. Depend upon it, the reaction has commenced.'

'We shall have some trouble with France,' said the ambassador, 'unless there is a change here.'

'The Church is weary of the present

men,' said the great personage. 'No one really knows what they are after.'

'And how can the country be governed without the Church?' exclaimed Zenobia. 'If the country once thinks the Church is in danger, the affair will soon be finished. The King ought to be told what is going on.'

'Nothing is going on,' said the ambassador; 'but everybody is afraid of something.'

'The King's friends should impress upon him never to lose sight of the landed interest,' said the great personage.

'How can any government go on without the support of the Church and the land?' exclaimed Zenobia. 'It is quite unnatural.'

'That is the mystery,' remarked the ambassador. 'Here is a government, supported by none of the influences hitherto deemed indispensable, and yet it exists.'

'The newspapers support it,' said the great personage, 'and the Dissenters, who are trying to bring themselves into notice, and who are said to have some influence in the northern counties, and the Whigs, who are in a hole, are willing to seize the hand of the

ministry to help them out of it; and then there is always a number of people who will support any government—and so the thing works.'

'They have got a new name for this hybrid sentiment,' said the ambassador. 'They call it public opinion.'

'How very absurd!' said Zenobia; 'a mere nickname. As if there could be any opinion but that of the Sovereign and the two Houses of Parliament.'

'They are trying to introduce here the continental Liberalism,' said the great personage. 'Now we know what Liberalism means on the continent. It means the abolition of property and religion. Those ideas would not suit this country; and I often puzzle myself to foresee how they will attempt to apply Liberal opinions here.'

'I shall always think,' said Zenobia, 'that Lord Liverpool went much too far, though I never said so in his time; for I always uphold my friends.'

'Well, we shall see what Canning will do about the Test and Corporation Acts,' said the

great personage. 'I understand they mean to push him.'

'By the bye, how is he really?' said the ambassador. 'What are the accounts this afternoon?'

'Here is a gentleman who will tell us,' said Zenobia, as Mr. Ferrars entered and saluted her.

'And what is your news from Chiswick?' she inquired.

'They say at Brookes', that he will be at Downing Street on Monday.'

'I doubt it,' said Zenobia, but with an expression of disappointment.

Zenobia invited Mr. Ferrars to join her immediate circle. The great personage and the ambassador were confidentially affable to one whom Zenobia so distinguished. Their conversation was in hushed tones, as become the initiated. Even Zenobia seemed subdued, and listened; and to listen, among her many talents, was perhaps her rarest. Mr. Ferrars was one of her favourites, and Zenobia liked young men who she thought would become ministers of State.

An Hungarian Princess who had quitted the opera early that she might look in at Zenobia's was now announced. The arrival of this great lady made a stir. Zenobia embraced her, and the great personage with affectionate homage yielded to her instantly the place of honour, and then soon retreated to the laughing voices in the distance that had already more than once attracted and charmed his ear.

'Mind; I see you to-morrow,' said Zenobia to Mr. Ferrars as he also withdrew 'I shall have something to tell you.'

CHAPTER III.

THE father of Mr. Ferrars had the reputation of being the son of a once somewhat celebrated statesman, but the only patrimony he inherited from his presumed parent was a clerkship in the Treasury, where he found himself drudging at an early age. Nature had endowed him with considerable abilities, and peculiarly adapted to the scene of their display. It was difficult to decide which was most remarkable, his shrewdness or his capacity of labour. His quickness of perception and mastery of details made him in a few years an authority in the office, and a Secretary of the Treasury, who was quite ignorant of details, but who was a good judge of human character, had the sense to appoint Ferrars his private secretary. This happy preferment in time opened the whole official world to one not only singularly

qualified for that kind of life, but who possessed the peculiar gifts that were then commencing to be much in demand in those circles. We were then entering that era of commercial and financial reform which had been, if not absolutely occasioned, certainly precipitated, by the revolt of our colonies. Knowledge of finance and acquaintance with tariffs were then rare gifts, and before five years of his private secretaryship had expired, Ferrars was mentioned to Mr. Pitt as the man at the Treasury who could do something that the great minister required. This decided his lot. Mr. Pitt found in Ferrars the instrument he wanted, and appreciating all his qualities placed him in a position which afforded them full play. The minister returned Ferrars to Parliament, for the Treasury then had boroughs of its own, and the new member was preferred to an important and laborious post. So long as Pitt and Grenville were in the ascendant, Mr. Ferrars toiled and flourished. He was exactly the man they liked; unwearied, vigilant, clear and cold; with a dash of natural sarcasm developed by a sharp and varied experience. He

disappeared from the active world in the latter years of the Liverpool reign, when a newer generation and more bustling ideas successfully asserted their claims ; but he retired with the solace of a sinecure, a pension, and a privy-councillorship. The Cabinet he had never entered, nor dared to hope to enter. It was the privilege of an inner circle even in our then contracted public life. It was the dream of Ferrars to revenge in this respect his fate in the person of his son, and only child. He was resolved that his offspring should enjoy all those advantages of education and breeding and society of which he himself had been deprived. For him was to be reserved a full initiation in those costly ceremonies which, under the names of Eton and Christchurch, in his time fascinated and dazzled mankind. His son, William Pitt Ferrars, realised even more than his father's hopes. Extremely good-looking, he was gifted with a precocity of talent. He was the marvel of Eton and the hope of Oxford. As a boy, his Latin verses threw enraptured tutors into paroxysms of praise, while debating societies hailed with

acclamation clearly another heaven-born minister. He went up to Oxford about the time that the examinations were reformed and rendered really efficient. This only increased his renown, for the name of Ferrars figured among the earliest double-firsts. Those were days when a crack university reputation often opened the doors of the House of Commons to a young aspirant; at least, after a season. But Ferrars had not to wait. His father, who watched his career with the passionate interest with which a Newmarket man watches the development of some gifted yearling, took care that all the odds should be in his favour in the race of life. An old colleague of the elder Mr. Ferrars, a worthy peer with many boroughs, placed a seat at the disposal of the youthful hero, the moment he was prepared to accept it, and he might be said to have left the University only to enter the House of Commons.

There, if his career had not yet realised the dreams of his youthful admirers, it had at least been one of progress and unbroken prosperity. His first speech was successful, though

florid, but it was on foreign affairs, which permit rhetoric, and in those days demanded at least one Virgilian quotation. In this latter branch of oratorical adornment Ferrars was never deficient. No young man of that time, and scarcely any old one, ventured to address Mr. Speaker without being equipped with a Latin passage. Ferrars, in this respect, was triply armed. Indeed, when he entered public life, full of hope and promise, though disciplined to a certain extent by his mathematical training, he had read very little more than some Latin writers, some Greek plays, and some treatises of Aristotle. These with a due course of Bampton Lectures and some dipping into the 'Quarterly Review,' then in its prime, qualified a man in those days, not only for being a member of Parliament, but becoming a candidate for the responsibility of statesmanship. Ferrars made his way; for two years he was occasionally asked by the minister to speak, and then Lord Castlereagh, who liked young men, made him a Lord of the Treasury. He was Under-Secretary of State, and 'very rising,' when the death of

Lord Liverpool brought about the severance of the Tory party, and Mr. Ferrars, mainly under the advice of Zenobia, resigned his office when Mr. Canning was appointed Minister, and cast in his lot with the great destiny of the Duke of Wellington.

The elder Ferrars had the reputation of being wealthy. It was supposed that he had enjoyed opportunities of making money, and had availed himself of them, but this was not true. Though a cynic, and with little respect for his fellow creatures, Ferrars had a pride in official purity, and when the Government was charged with venality and corruption, he would observe, with a dry chuckle, that he had seen a great deal of life, and that for his part he would not much trust any man out of Downing Street. He had been unable to resist the temptation of connecting his life with that of an individual of birth and rank; and in a weak moment, perhaps his only one, he had given his son a step-mother in a still good-looking and very expensive Viscountess Dowager.

Mr. Ferrars was anxious that his son

should make a great alliance, but he was so distracted between prudential considerations and his desire that in the veins of his grandchildren there should flow blood of undoubted nobility, that he could never bring to his purpose that clear and concentrated will which was one of the causes of his success in life; and, in the midst of his perplexities, his son unexpectedly settled the question himself. Though naturally cold and calculating, William Ferrars, like most of us, had a vein of romance in his being, and it asserted itself. There was a Miss Carey, who suddenly became the beauty of the season. She was an orphan, and reputed to be no inconsiderable heiress, and was introduced to the world by an aunt who was a duchess, and who meant that her niece should be the same. Everybody talked about them, and they went everywhere—among other places to the House of Commons, where Miss Carey, spying the senators from the old ventilator in the ceiling of St. Stephen's Chapel, dropped in her excitement her opera-glass, which fell at the feet of Mr. Under-Secretary Ferrars. He hastened

to restore it to its beautiful owner, whom he found accompanied by several of his friends, and he was not only thanked, but invited to remain with them ; and the next day he called, and he called very often afterwards, and many other things happened, and at the end of July, the beauty of the season was married not to a Duke, but to a rising man, who Zenobia, who at first disapproved of the match—for Zenobia never liked her male friends to marry —was sure would one day be Prime Minister of England.

Mrs. Ferrars was of the same opinion as Zenobia, for she was ambitious, and the dream was captivating. And Mrs. Ferrars soon gained Zenobia's good graces, for she had many charms, and, though haughty to the multitude, was a first-rate flatterer. Zenobia liked flattery, and always said she did. Mr. Under-Secretary Ferrars took a mansion in Hill Street, and furnished it with befitting splendour. His dinners were celebrated, and Mrs. Ferrars gave suppers after the opera. The equipages of Mrs. Ferrars were distinguished, and they had a large retinue of servants. They had only

two children, and they were twins, a brother and a sister, who were brought up like the children of princes. Partly for them, and partly because a minister should have a Tusculum, the Ferrars soon engaged a magnificent villa at Wimbledon, which had the advantage of admirable stables, convenient, as Mrs. Ferrars was fond of horses, and liked the children too, with their fancy ponies, to be early accustomed to riding. All this occasioned expenditure, but old Mr. Ferrars made his son a liberal allowance, and young Mrs. Ferrars was an heiress, or the world thought so, which is nearly the same, and then, too, young Mr. Ferrars was a rising man, in office, and who would always be in office for the rest of his life; at least, Zenobia said so, because he was on the right side and the Whigs were nowhere, and never would be anywhere, which was quite right, as they had wished to make us the slaves of Bonaparte.

When the King, after much hesitation, sent for Mr. Canning, on the resignation of Lord Liverpool, the Zenobian theory seemed a little at fault, and William Ferrars absolutely out

of office had more than one misgiving ; but after some months of doubt and anxiety, it seemed after all the great lady was right. The unexpected disappearance of Mr. Canning from the scene, followed by the transient and embarrassed phantom of Lord Goderich, seemed to indicate an inexorable destiny that England should be ruled by the most eminent man of the age, and the most illustrious of her citizens. William Ferrars, under the inspiration of Zenobia, had thrown in his fortunes with the Duke, and after nine months of disquietude found his due reward. In the January that succeeded the August conversation in St. James' Street with Sidney Wilton, William Ferrars was sworn of the Privy Council, and held high office, on the verge of the Cabinet.

Mr. Ferrars had a dinner party in Hill Street on the day he had returned from Windsor with the seals of his new office. The catastrophe of the Goderich Cabinet, almost on the eve of the meeting of Parliament, had been so sudden, that, not anticipating such a state of affairs, Ferrars, among his other guests, had invited Sidney Wilton. He was rather

regretting this when, as his carriage stopped at his own door, he observed that very gentleman on his threshold.

Wilton greeted him warmly, and congratulated him on his promotion. 'I do so at once,' he added, 'because I shall not have the opportunity this evening. I was calling here in the hope of seeing Mrs. Ferrars, and asking her to excuse me from being your guest to-day.'

'Well, it is rather awkward,' said Ferrars, 'but I could have no idea of this when you were so kind as to say you would come.'

'Oh, nothing of that sort,' said Sidney. 'I am out and you are in, and I hope you may be in for a long, long time. I dare say it may be so, and the Duke is the man of the age, as you always said he was. I hope your being in office is not to deprive me of your pleasant dinners; it would be too bad to lose my place both at Whitehall and in Hill Street.'

'I trust that will never happen, my dear fellow; but to-day I thought it might be embarrassing.'

'Not at all; I could endure without wincing even the triumphant glance of Zeno-

bia. The fact is, I have some business of the most pressing nature which has suddenly arisen, and which demands my immediate attention.'

Ferrars expressed his regret, though in fact he was greatly relieved, and they parted.

Zenobia did dine with the William Ferrars to-day, and her handsome husband came with her, a knight of the garter and just appointed to a high office in the household by the new government. Even the excitement of the hour did not disturb his indigenous repose. It was a dignified serenity, quite natural, and quite compatible with easy and even cordial manners, and an address always considerate even when not sympathetic. He was not a loud or a long talker, but his terse remarks were full of taste and a just appreciation of things. If they were sometimes trenchant, the blade was of fine temper. Old Mr. Ferrars was there and the Viscountess Edgware. His hair had become quite silvered, and his cheek rosy as a December apple. His hazel eyes twinkled with satisfaction as he remembered the family had now produced two

privy councillors. Lord Pomeroy was there, the great lord who had returned William Ferrars to Parliament, a little man, quiet, shy, rather insignificant in appearance, but who observed everybody and everything; a conscientious man, who was always doing good, in silence and secrecy, and denounced as a boroughmonger, had never sold a seat in his life, and was always looking out for able men of character to introduce them to public affairs. It was not a formal party, but had grown up in great degree out of the circumstances of the moment. There were more men than women, and all men in office or devoted supporters of the new ministry.

Mrs. Ferrars, without being a regular beauty, had a voluptuous face and form. Her complexion was brilliant, with large and long-lashed eyes of blue. Her mouth was certainly too large, but the pouting richness of her lips and the splendour of her teeth baffled criticism. She was a woman who was always gorgeously or fantastically attired.

'I never can understand,' would sometimes observe Zenobia's husband to his bril-

liant spouse, 'how affairs are carried on in this world. Now we have, my dear, fifty thousand per annum; and I do not see how Ferrars can have much more than five; and yet he lives much as we do, perhaps better. I know Gibson showed me a horse last week that I very much wanted, but I would not give him two hundred guineas for it. I called there to-day to look after it again, for it would have suited me exactly, but I was told I was too late, and it was sold to Mrs. Ferrars.'

'My dear, you know I do not understand money matters,' Zenobia said in reply. 'I never could; but you should remember that old Ferrars must be very rich, and that William Ferrars is the most rising man of the day, and is sure to be in the cabinet before he is forty.'

Everybody had an appetite for dinner to-day, and the dinner was worthy of the appetites. Zenobia's husband declared to himself that he never dined so well, though he gave his *chef* 500*l.* a year, and old Lord Pomeroy, who had not yet admitted French wines to

his own table, seemed quite abashed with the number of his wine-glasses and their various colours, and, as he tasted one succulent dish after another, felt a proud satisfaction in having introduced to public life so distinguished a man as William Ferrars.

With the dessert, not without some ceremony, were introduced the two most remarkable guests of the entertainment, and these were the twins ; children of singular beauty, and dressed, if possible, more fancifully and brilliantly than their mamma. They resembled each other, and had the same brilliant complexions, rich chestnut hair, delicately arched brows, and dark blue eyes. Though only eight years of age, a most unchildlike self-possession distinguished them. The expression of their countenances was haughty, disdainful, and supercilious. Their beautiful features seemed quite unimpassioned, and they moved as if they expected everything to yield to them. The girl, whose long ringlets were braided with pearls, was ushered to a seat next to her father, and, like her brother, who was placed by Mrs. Ferrars, was soon engaged

in negligently tasting delicacies, while she seemed apparently unconscious of anyone being present, except when she replied to those who addressed her with a stare and a haughty monosyllable. The boy, in a black velvet jacket with large Spanish buttons of silver filagree, a shirt of lace, and a waistcoat of white satin, replied with reserve, but some condescension, to the good-natured but half-humorous inquiries of the husband of Zenobia.

'And when do you go to school?' asked his lordship in a kind voice and with a laughing eye.

'I shall go to Eton in two years,' replied the child without the slightest emotion, and not withdrawing his attention from the grapes he was tasting, or even looking at his inquirer, 'and then I shall go to Christchurch, and then I shall go into Parliament.'

'Myra,' said an intimate of the family, a handsome private secretary of Mr. Ferrars, to the daughter of the house, as he supplied her plate with some choicest delicacies, 'I hope you have not forgotten your engagement to

me which you made at Wimbledon two years ago?'

'What engagement?' she haughtily inquired.

'To marry me.'

'I should not think of marrying anyone who was not in the House of Lords,' she replied, and she shot at him a glance of contempt.

The ladies rose. As they were ascending the stairs, one of them said to Mrs. Ferrars, 'Your son's name is very pretty, but it is very uncommon, is it not?'

''Tis a family name. The first Carey who bore it was a courtier of Charles the First, and we have never since been without it. William wanted our boy to be christened Pomeroy, but I was always resolved, if I ever had a son, that he should be named ENDYMION.'

CHAPTER IV

About the time that the ladies rose from the dinner-table in Hill Street, Mr. Sidney Wilton entered the hall of the Clarendon Hotel and murmured an inquiry of the porter. Whereupon a bell was rung, and soon a foreign servant appeared, and bowing invited Mr. Wilton to ascend the staircase and follow him. Mr. Wilton was ushered through an antechamber into a room of some importance, lofty and decorated, and obviously adapted for distinguished guests. On a principal table a desk was open and many papers strewn about. Apparently some person had only recently been writing there. There were in the room several musical instruments; the piano was open, there was a harp and a guitar. The room was rather dimly lighted, but cheer-

ful from the steady blaze of the fire, before which Mr. Wilton stood, not long alone, for an opposite door opened, and a lady advanced leading with her left hand a youth of interesting mien and about twelve years of age. The lady was fair and singularly thin. It seemed that her delicate hand must really be transparent. Her cheek was sunk, but the expression of her large brown eyes was inexpressibly pleasing. She wore her own hair, once the most celebrated in Europe, and still uncovered. Though the prodigal richness of the tresses had disappeared, the arrangement was still striking from its grace. That rare quality pervaded the being of this lady, and it was impossible not to be struck with her carriage as she advanced to greet her guest; free from all affectation and yet full of movement and gestures, which might have been the study of painters.

'Ah!' she exclaimed as she gave him her hand, which he pressed to his lips, 'you are ever faithful.'

Seating themselves, she continued, 'You have not seen my boy since he sate upon your

knee. Florestan, salute Mr. Wilton, your mother's most cherished friend.'

'This is a sudden arrival,' said Mr. Wilton.

'Well, they would not let us rest,' said the lady. 'Our only refuge was Switzerland, but I cannot breathe among the mountains, and so, after a while, we stole to an obscure corner of the south, and for a time we were tranquil. But soon the old story: representations, remonstrances, warnings, and threats, appeals to Vienna, and lectures from Prince Metternich, not the less impressive because they were courteous, and even gallant.'

'And had nothing occurred to give a colour to such complaints? Or was it sheer persecution?'

'Well, you know,' replied the lady, 'we wished to remain quiet and obscure; but where the lad is, they will find him out. It often astonishes me. I believe if we were in the centre of a forest in some Indian isle, with no companions but monkeys and elephants, a secret agent would appear—some devoted victim of our family, prepared to restore our fortunes and renovate his own. I speak the

truth to you always. I have never countenanced these people; I have never encouraged them; but it is impossible rudely to reject the sympathy of those who, after all, are your fellow-sufferers, and some of whom have given proof of even disinterested devotion. For my own part, I have never faltered in my faith, that Florestan would some day sit on the throne of his father, dark as appears to be our life; but I have never much believed that the great result could be occasioned or precipitated by intrigues, but rather by events more powerful than man, and led on by that fatality in which his father believed.'

'And now you think of remaining here?' said Mr. Wilton.

'No,' said the lady; 'that I cannot do. I love everything in this country except its climate and, perhaps, its hotels. I think of trying the south of Spain, and fancy, if quite alone, I might vegetate there unnoticed. I cannot bring myself altogether to quit Europe. I am, my dear Sidney, intensely European. But Spain is not exactly the country I should fix upon to form kings and statesmen. And

this is the point on which I wished to consult you. I want Florestan to receive an English education, and I want you to put me in the way of accomplishing this. It might be convenient, under such circumstances, that he should not obtrude his birth—perhaps, that it should be concealed. He has many honourable names besides the one which indicates the state to which he was born. But, on all these points, we want your advice.' And she seemed to appeal to her son, who bowed his head with a slight smile, but did not speak.

Mr. Wilton expressed his deep interest in her wishes, and promised to consider how they might best be accomplished, and then the conversation took a more general tone.

'This change of government in your country,' said the lady, 'so unexpected, so utterly unforeseen, disturbs me; in fact, it decided my hesitating movements. I cannot but believe that the accession of the Duke of Wellington to power must be bad, at least, for us. It is essentially reactionary. They are triumphing at Vienna.'

'Have they cause?' said Mr. Wilton. 'I

am an impartial witness, for I have no post in the new administration; but the leading colleagues of Mr. Canning form part of it, and the conduct of foreign affairs remains in the same hands.'

'That is consoling,' said the lady. 'I wonder if Lord Dudley would see me. Perhaps not. Ministers do not love pretenders. I knew him when I was not a pretender,' added the lady, with the sweetest of smiles, 'and thought him agreeable. He was witty. Ah! Sidney, those were happy days. I look back to the past with regret, but without remorse. One might have done more good, but one did some;' and she sighed.

'You seemed to me,' said Sidney with emotion, 'to diffuse benefits and blessings among all around you.'

'And I read,' said the lady, a little indignant, 'in some memoirs the other day, that our court was a corrupt and dissolute court. It was a court of pleasure, if you like; but of pleasure that animated and refined, and put the world in good humour, which, after all, is good government. The most corrupt and dissolute

courts on the continent of Europe that I have known,' said the lady, 'have been outwardly the dullest and most decorous.'

'My memory of those days,' said Mr. Wilton, 'is of ceaseless grace and inexhaustible charm.'

'Well,' said the lady, 'if I sinned I have at least suffered. And I hope they were only sins of omission. I wanted to see everybody happy, and tried to make them so. But let us talk no more of ourselves. The unfortunate are always egotistical. Tell me something of Mr. Wilton; and, above all, tell me why you are not in the new government.'

'I have not been invited,' said Mr. Wilton. 'There are more claimants than can be satisfied, and my claims are not very strong. It is scarcely a disappointment to me. I shall continue in public life; but, so far as political responsibility is concerned, I would rather wait. I have some fancies on that head, but I will not trouble you with them. My time, therefore, is at my command; and so,' he added smilingly, 'I can attend to the education of Prince Florestan.'

'Do you hear that, Florestan?' said the lady to her son; 'I told you we had a friend. Thank Mr. Wilton.'

And the young Prince bowed as before, but with a more serious expression. He, however, said nothing.

'I see you have not forgotten your most delightful pursuit,' said Mr. Wilton, and he looked towards the musical instruments.

'No,' said the lady; 'throned or discrowned, music has ever been the charm or consolation of my life.'

'Pleasure should follow business,' said Mr. Wilton, 'and we have transacted ours. Would it be too bold if I asked again to hear those tones which have so often enchanted me?'

'My voice has not fallen off,' said the lady, 'for you know it was never first-rate. But they were kind enough to say it had some expression, probably because I generally sang my own words to my own music. I will sing you my farewell to Florestan,' she added gaily, and she took up her guitar, and then in tones of melancholy sweetness, break-

ing at last into a gushing burst of long-controlled affection, she expressed the agony and devotion of a mother's heart. Mr. Wilton was a little agitated; her son left the room. The mother turned round with a smiling face, and said, 'The darling cannot bear to hear it, but I sing it on purpose, to prepare him for the inevitable.'

'He is soft-hearted,' said Mr. Wilton.

'He is the most affectionate of beings,' replied the mother. 'Affectionate and mysterious. I can say no more. I ought to tell you his character. I cannot. You may say he may have none. I do not know. He has abilities, for he acquires knowledge with facility, and knows a great deal for a boy. But he never gives an opinion. He is silent and solitary. Poor darling! he has rarely had companions, and that may be the cause. He seems to me always to be thinking.'

'Well, a public school will rouse him from his reveries,' said Mr. Wilton.

'As he is away at this moment, I will say that which I should not care to say before his face,' said the lady. 'You are about to do

me a great service, not the first; and before I leave this, we may—we must—meet again more than once, but there is no time like the present. The separation between Florestan and myself may be final. It is sad to think of such things, but they must be thought of, for they are probable. I still look in a mirror, Sidney; I am not so frightened by what has occurred since we first met, to be afraid of that—but I never deceive myself. I do not know what may be the magical effect of the raisins of Malaga, but if it save my life the grape cure will indeed achieve a miracle. Do not look gloomy. Those who have known real grief seldom seem sad. I have been struggling with sorrow for ten years, but I have got through it with music and singing, and my boy. See now—he will be a source of expense, and it will not do for you to be looking to a woman for supplies. Women are generous but not precise in money matters. I have some excuse, for the world has treated me not very well. I never got my pension regularly; now I never get it at all. So much for the treaties, but everybody laughs

at them. Here is the fortune of Florestan, and I wish it all to be spent on his education,' and she took a case from her bosom. 'They are not the crown jewels though. The memoirs I was reading the other day say I ran away with them. That is false like most things said of me. But these are gems of Golconda, which I wish you to realise and expend for his service. They were the gift of love, and they were worn in love.'

'It is unnecessary,' said Mr. Wilton, deprecating the offer by his attitude.

'Hush!' said the lady. 'I am still a sovereign to you, and I must be obeyed.'

Mr. Wilton took the case of jewels, pressed it to his lips, and then placed it in the breast pocket of his coat. He was about to retire, when the lady added, 'I must give you this copy of my song.'

'And you will write my name on it?'

'Certainly,' replied the lady, as she went to the table and wrote, 'For Mr. Sidney Wilton, from AGRIPPINA.'

CHAPTER V

In the meantime, power and prosperity clustered round the roof and family of Ferrars. He himself was in the prime of manhood, with an exalted position in the world of politics, and with a prospect of the highest. The Government of which he was a member was not only deemed strong, but eternal. The favour of the court and the confidence of the country were alike lavished on it. The government of the Duke could only be measured by his life, and his influence was irresistible. It was a dictatorship of patriotism. The country, long accustomed to a strong and undisturbed administration, and frightened by the changes and catastrophes which had followed the retirement of Lord Liverpool, took refuge in the powerful will and splendid reputation of a real hero.

Mrs. Ferrars was as ambitious of social distinction as her husband was of political power. She was a woman of taste, but of luxurious taste. She had a passion for splendour, which, though ever regulated by a fine perception of the fitness of things, was still costly. Though her mien was in general haughty, she flattered Zenobia, and consummately. Zenobia, who liked handsome people, even handsome women, and persons who were dressed beautifully, and delighted her eye by their grace and fine manners, was quite won by Mrs. Ferrars, against whom at first she was inclined to be a little prejudiced. There was an entire alliance between them, and though Mrs. Ferrars greatly influenced and almost ruled Zenobia, the wife of the minister was careful always to acknowledge the Queen of Fashion as her suzeraine.

The great world then, compared with the huge society of the present period, was limited in its proportions, and composed of elements more refined though far less various. It consisted mainly of the great landed aristocracy, who had quite absorbed the nabobs of India,

and had nearly appropriated the huge West Indian fortunes. Occasionally, an eminent banker or merchant invested a large portion of his accumulations in land, and in the purchase of parliamentary influence, and was in time duly admitted into the sanctuary. But those vast and successful invasions of society by new classes which have since occurred, though impending, had not yet commenced. The manufacturers, the railway kings, the colossal contractors, the discoverers of nuggets, had not yet found their place in society and the senate. There were then, perhaps, more great houses open than at the present day, but there were very few little ones. The necessity of providing regular occasions for the assembling of the miscellaneous world of fashion led to the institution of Almack's, which died out in the advent of the new system of society, and in the fierce competition of its inexhaustible private entertainments.

The season then was brilliant and sustained, but it was not flurried. People did not go to various parties on the same night. They remained where they were assembled

and, not being in a hurry, were more agreeable than they are at the present day. Conversation was more cultivated; manners, though unconstrained, were more stately; and the world, being limited, knew itself much better. On the other hand, the sympathies of society were more contracted than they are at present. The pressure of population had not opened the heart of man. The world attended to its poor in its country parishes, and subscribed and danced for the Spitalfields weavers when their normal distress had overflowed, but their knowledge of the people did not exceed these bounds, and the people knew very little more about themselves. They were only half-born.

The darkest hour precedes the dawn, and a period of unusual stillness often, perhaps usually, heralds the social convulsion. At this moment the general tranquillity and even content were remarkable. In politics the Whigs were quite prepared to extend to the Duke the same provisional confidence that had been accepted by Mr. Canning, and conciliation began to be an accepted phrase, which meant in practice some share on their part of the

good things of the State. The country itself required nothing. There was a general impression, indeed, that they had been advancing at a rather rapid rate, and that it was as well that the reins should be entrusted to a wary driver. Zenobia, who represented society, was enraptured that the career of revolution had been stayed. She still mourned over the concession of the Manchester and Liverpool railway in a moment of Liberal infatuation, but flattered herself that any extension of the railway system might certainly be arrested, and on this head the majority of society, perhaps even of the country, was certainly on her side.

'I have some good news for you,' said one of her young favourites as he attended her reception. 'We have prevented this morning the lighting of Grosvenor Square by gas by a large majority.'

'I felt confident that disgrace would never occur,' said Zenobia, triumphant. 'And by a large majority! I wonder how Lord Pomeroy voted.'

'Against us.'

'How can one save this country?' exclaimed Zenobia. 'I believe now the story that he has ordered Lady Pomeroy not to go to the Drawing Room in a sedan chair.'

One bright May morning in the spring that followed the formation of the government that was to last for ever, Mrs. Ferrars received the world at a fanciful entertainment in the beautiful grounds of her Wimbledon villa. The day was genial, the scene was flushed with roses and pink thorns, and brilliant groups, amid bursts of music, clustered and sauntered on the green turf of bowery lawns. Mrs. Ferrars, on a rustic throne, with the wondrous twins in still more wonderful attire, distributed alternate observations of sympathetic gaiety to a Russian Grand Duke and to the serene heir of a German principality. And yet there was really an expression on her countenance of restlessness, not to say anxiety which ill accorded with the dulcet tones and the wreathed smiles which charmed her august companions. Zenobia, the great Zenobia, had not arrived, and the hours were advancing. The Grand Duke played with the beautiful

and haughty infants, and the German Prince inquired of Endymion whether he were destined to be one of Her Majesty's guards; but still Zenobia did not come, and Mrs. Ferrars could scarcely conceal her vexation. But there was no real occasion for it. For even at this moment, with avant-courier and outriders and badged postilions on her four horses of race, the lodge-gates were opening for the reception of the great lady, who herself soon appeared in the distance; and Mrs. Ferrars, accompanied by her distinguished guests, immediately rose and advanced to receive the Queen of Fashion. No one appreciated a royal presence more highly than Zenobia. It was her habit to impress upon her noble fellows of both sexes that there were relations of intimacy between herself and the royal houses of Europe, which were not shared by her class. She liked to play the part of a social mediator between the aristocracy and royal houses. A German Serenity was her delight, but a Russian Grand Duke was her embodiment of power and pomp, and sound principles in their most authentic and orthodox form. And yet though she ad-

dressed their highnesses with her usual courtly vivacity, and poured forth inquiries which seemed to indicate the most familiar acquaintance with the latest incidents from Schönbrunn or the Rhine, though she embraced her hostess, and even kissed the children, the practised eye of Mrs. Ferrars, whose life was a study of Zenobia, detected that her late appearance had been occasioned by an important cause, and, what was more, that Zenobia was anxious to communicate it to her. With feminine tact Mrs. Ferrars moved on with her guests until the occasion offered when she could present some great ladies to the princes; and then dismissing the children on appropriate missions, she was not surprised when Zenobia immediately exclaimed: 'Thank heaven, we are at last alone! You must have been surprised I was so late. Well, guess what has happened?' and then as Mrs. Ferrars shook her head, she continued: 'They are all four out!'

'All four!'

'Yes; Lord Dudley, Lord Palmerston, and Charles Grant follow Huskisson. I do not

believe the first ever meant to go, but the Duke would not listen to his hypocritical explanations, and the rest have followed. I am surprised about Lord Dudley, as I know he loved his office.'

'I am alarmed,' said Mrs. Ferrars.

'Not the slightest cause for fear,' exclaimed the intrepid Zenobia. 'It must have happened sooner or later. I am delighted at it. We shall now have a cabinet of our own. They never would have rested till they had brought in some Whigs, and the country hates the Whigs. No wonder, when we remember that if they had had their way we should have been wearing sabots at this time, with a French prefect probably in Holland House.'

'And whom will they put in the cabinet?' inquired Mrs. Ferrars.

'Our good friends, I hope,' said Zenobia, with an inspiring smile; 'but I have heard nothing about that yet. I am a little sorry about Lord Dudley, as I think they have drawn him into their mesh; but as for the other three, especially Huskisson and Lord Palmerston, I can tell you the Duke has

never had a quiet moment since they joined him. We shall now begin to reign. The only mistake was ever to have admitted them. I think now we have got rid of Liberalism for ever.'

CHAPTER VI.

Mr. Ferrars did not become a cabinet minister, but this was a vexation rather than a disappointment, and transient. The unexpected vacancies were filled by unexpected personages. So great a change in the frame of the ministry, without any promotion for himself, was on the first impression not agreeable, but reflection and the sanguine wisdom of Zenobia soon convinced him that all was for the best, that the thought of such rapid preferment was unreasonable, and that time and the due season must inevitably bring all that he could desire, especially as any term to the duration of the ministry was not now to be foreseen: scarcely indeed possible. In short it was shown to him that the Tory party, renovated and restored, had entered upon a new lease of authority, which would

stamp its character on the remainder of the nineteenth century, as Mr. Pitt and his school had marked its earlier and memorable years.

And yet this very reconstruction of the government necessarily led to an incident which, in its consequences, changed the whole character of English politics, and commenced a series of revolutions which has not yet closed.

One of the new ministers who had been preferred to a place which Mr. Ferrars might have filled was an Irish gentleman, and a member for one of the most considerable counties in his country. He was a good speaker, and the government was deficient in debating power in the House of Commons; he was popular and influential.

The return of a cabinet minister by a large constituency was more appreciated in the days of close boroughs than at present. There was a rumour that the new minister was to be opposed, but Zenobia laughed the rumour to scorn. As she irresistibly remarked at one of her evening gatherings, 'Every landowner

in the county is in his favour ; therefore it is impossible.' The statistics of Zenobia were quite correct, yet the result was different from what she anticipated. An Irish lawyer, a professional agitator, himself a Roman Catholic and therefore ineligible, announced himself as a candidate in opposition to the new minister, and on the day of election, thirty thousand peasants, setting at defiance all the landowners of the county, returned O'Connell at the head of the poll, and placed among not the least memorable of historical events—the Clare election.

This event did not however occur until the end of the year 1828, for the state of the law then prevented the writ from being moved until that time, and during the whole of that year the Ferrars family had pursued a course of unflagging display. Courage, expenditure, and tact combined, had realised almost the height of that social ambition to which Mrs. Ferrars soared. Even in the limited and exclusive circle which then prevailed, she began to be counted among the great dames. As for the twins, they seemed quite worthy of their

beautiful and luxurious mother. Proud, wilful, and selfish, they had one redeeming quality, an intense affection for each other. The sister seemed to have the commanding spirit, for Endymion was calm, but, if he were ruled by his sister, she was ever willing to be his slave, and to sacrifice every consideration to his caprice and his convenience.

The year 1829 was eventful, but to Ferrars more agitating than anxious. When it was first known that the head of the cabinet, whose colleague had been defeated at Clare, was himself about to propose the emancipation of the Roman Catholics, there was a thrill throughout the country; but after a time the success of the operation was not doubted, and was anticipated as a fresh proof of the irresistible fortune of the heroic statesman. There was some popular discontent in the country at the proposal, but it was mainly organised and stimulated by the Dissenters, and that section of Churchmen who most resembled them. The High Church party, the descendants of the old connection which had rallied round Sacheverell, had subsided into formalism,

and shrank from any very active co-operation with their evangelical brethren.

The English Church had no competent leaders among the clergy. The spirit that has animated and disturbed our latter times seemed quite dead, and no one anticipated its resurrection. The bishops had been selected from college dons, men profoundly ignorant of the condition and the wants of the country. To have edited a Greek play with second-rate success, or to have been the tutor of some considerable patrician, was the qualification then deemed desirable and sufficient for an office, which at this day is at least reserved for eloquence and energy. The social influence of the episcopal bench was nothing. A prelate was rarely seen in the saloons of Zenobia. It is since the depths of religious thought have been probed, and the influence of woman in the spread and sustenance of religious feeling has again been recognised, that fascinating and fashionable prelates have become favoured guests in the refined saloons of the mighty, and, while apparently indulging in the vanities of the hour, have re-

established the influence which in old days guided a Matilda or the mother of Constantine.

The end of the year 1829, however, brought a private event of moment to the Ferrars family. The elder Mr. Ferrars died. The world observed at the time how deeply affected his son was at this event. The relations between father and son had always been commendable, but the world was hardly prepared for Mr. Ferrars, junior, being so entirely overwhelmed. It would seem that nothing but the duties of public life could have restored him to his friends, and even these duties he relinquished for an unusual time. The world was curious to know the amount of his inheritance, but the proof of the will was unusually delayed, and public events soon occurred which alike consigned the will and the will-maker to oblivion.

CHAPTER VII.

THE Duke of Wellington applied himself to the treatment of the critical circumstances of 1830 with that blended patience and quickness of perception to which he owed the success of many campaigns. Quite conscious of the difficulties he had to encounter, he was nevertheless full of confidence in his ability to control them. It is probable that the paramount desire of the Duke in his effort to confirm his power was to rally and restore the ranks of the Tory party, disturbed rather than broken up by the passing of the Relief Bill. During the very heat of the struggle it was significantly observed that the head of the powerful family of Lowther, in the House of Commons, was never asked to resign his office, although both himself and his following voted invariably against the government

measure. The order of the day was the utmost courtesy to the rebels, who were treated, as some alleged, with more consideration than the compliant. At the same time the desire of the Whigs to connect, perhaps even to merge themselves in the ministerial ranks, was not neglected. A Whig had been appointed to succeed the eccentric and too uncompromising Wetherell in the office of attorney-general, other posts had been placed at their disposal, and one even, an old companion in arms of the Duke, had entered the cabinet. The confidence in the Duke's star was not diminished, and under ordinary circumstances this balanced strategy would probably have been successful. But it was destined to cope with great and unexpected events.

The first was the unexpected demise of the crown. The death of King George the Fourth at the end of the month of June, according to the then existing constitution, necessitated a dissolution of parliament, and so deprived the minister of that invaluable quality of time, necessary to soften and win back his estranged friends. Nevertheless, it is not improbable,

that the Duke might still have succeeded, had it not been for the occurrence of the French insurrection of 1830, in the very heat of the preparations for the general election in England. The Whigs, who found the Duke going to the country without that reconstruction of his ministry on which they had counted, saw their opportunity and seized it. The triumphant riots of Paris were dignified into 'the three glorious days,' and the three glorious days were universally recognised as the triumph of civil and religious liberty. The names of Polignac and Wellington were adroitly connected together, and the phrase Parliamentary Reform began to circulate.

It was Zenobia's last reception for the season; on the morrow she was about to depart for her county, and canvass for her candidates. She was still undaunted, and never more inspiring. The excitement of the times was reflected in her manner. She addressed her arriving guests as they made their obeisance to her, asked for news and imparted it before she could be answered, declared that nothing had been more critical since '93, that there was only one man who

was able to deal with the situation, and thanked heaven he was not only in England, but in her drawing-room.

Ferrars, who had been dining with his patron, Lord Pomeroy, and had the satisfaction of feeling, that at any rate his return to the new parliament was certain, while helping himself to coffee could not refrain from saying in a low tone to a gentleman who was performing the same office, 'Our Whig friends seem in high spirits, baron.'

The gentleman thus addressed was Baron Sergius, a man of middle age. His countenance was singularly intelligent, tempered with an expression mild and winning. He had attended the Congress of Vienna to represent a fallen party, a difficult and ungracious task, but he had shown such high qualities in the fulfilment of his painful duties—so much knowledge, so much self-control, and so much wise and unaffected conciliation—that he had won universal respect, and especially with the English plenipotentiaries, so that when he visited England, which he did frequently, the houses of both parties were open to him, and he was as intimate with the Whigs as he was

with the great Duke, by whom he was highly esteemed.

'As we have got our coffee, let us sit down,' said the baron, and they withdrew to a settee against the wall.

'You know I am a Liberal, and have always been a Liberal,' said the baron; 'I know the value of civil and religious liberty, for I was born in a country where we had neither, and where we have since enjoyed either very fitfully. Nothing can be much drearier than the present lot of my country, and it is probable that these doings at Paris may help my friends a little, and they may again hold up their heads for a time; but I have seen too much, and am too old, to indulge in dreams. You are a young man and will live to see what I can only predict. The world is thinking of something else than civil and religious liberty. Those are phrases of the eighteenth century. The men who have won these 'three glorious days' at Paris, want neither civilisation nor religion. They will not be content till they have destroyed both. It is possible that they may be parried for a time; that the adroit wisdom of the house of

Orleans, guided by Talleyrand, may give this movement the resemblance, and even the character, of a middle-class revolution. It is no such thing; the barricades were not erected by the middle class. I know these people; it is a fraternity, not a nation. Europe is honeycombed with their secret societies. They are spread all over Spain. Italy is entirely mined. I know more of the southern than the northern nations, but I have been assured by one who should know, that the brotherhood are organised throughout Germany and even in Russia. I have spoken to the Duke about these things. He is not indifferent, or altogether incredulous, but he is so essentially practical that he can only deal with what he sees. I have spoken to the Whig leaders. They tell me that there is only one specific, and that a complete one—constitutional government; that with representative institutions, secret societies cannot coexist. I may be wrong, but it seems to me that with these secret societies representative institutions rather will disappear.'

CHAPTER VIII.

WHAT unexpectedly took place in the southern part of England, and especially in the maritime counties, during the autumn of 1830, seemed rather to confirm the intimations of Baron Sergius. The people in the rural districts had become disaffected. Their discontent was generally attributed to the abuses of the Poor Law, and to the lowness of their wages. But the abuses of the Poor Law, though intolerable, were generally in favour of the labourer, and though wages in some parts were unquestionably low, it was observed that the tumultuous assemblies, ending frequently in riot, were held in districts where this cause did not prevail. The most fearful feature of the approaching anarchy was the frequent acts of incendiaries. The blazing homesteads baffled the feeble police and the

helpless magistrates; and the government had reason to believe that foreign agents were actively promoting these mysterious crimes.

Amid partial discontent and general dejection came the crash of the Wellington ministry, and it required all the inspiration of Zenobia to sustain William Ferrars under the trial. But she was undaunted and sanguine as a morning in spring. Nothing could persuade her that the Whigs could ever form a government, and she was quite sure that the clerks in the public offices alone could turn them out. When the Whig government was formed, and its terrible programme announced, she laughed it to scorn, and derided with inexhaustible merriment the idea of the House of Commons passing a Reform Bill. She held a great assembly the night that General Gascoyne defeated the first measure by a majority of one, and passed an evening of ecstasy in giving and receiving congratulations. The morrow brought a graver brow, but still an indomitable spirit, and through all these tempestuous times Zenobia never

quailed, though mobs burnt the castles of dukes and the palaces of bishops.

Serious as was the state of affairs to William Ferrars, his condition was not so desperate as that of some of his friends. His seat at least was safe in the new parliament that was to pass a Reform Bill. As for the Tories generally, they were swept off the board. Scarcely a constituency, in which was a popular element, was faithful to them. The counties in those days were the great expounders of popular principles, and whenever England was excited, which was rare, she spoke through her freeholders. In this instance almost every Tory knight of the shire lost his seat except Lord Chandos, the member for Buckinghamshire, who owed his success entirely to his personal popularity. 'Never mind,' said Zenobia, 'what does it signify? The Lords will throw it out.'

And bravely and unceasingly she worked for this end. To assist this purpose it was necessary that a lengthened and powerful resistance to the measure should be made in the Commons; that the public mind should

be impressed with its dangerous principles, and its promoters cheapened by the exposure of their corrupt arrangements and their inaccurate details. It must be confessed that these objects were resolutely kept in view, and that the Tory opposition evinced energy and abilities not unworthy of a great parliamentary occasion. Ferrars particularly distinguished himself. He rose immensely in the estimation of the House, and soon the public began to talk of him. His statistics about the condemned boroughs were astounding and unanswerable: he was the only man who seemed to know anything of the elements of the new ones. He was as eloquent too as exact,—sometimes as fervent as Burke, and always as accurate as Cocker.

'I never thought it was in William Ferrars,' said a member, musingly, to a companion as they walked home one night; 'I always thought him a good man of business, and all that sort of thing—but, somehow or other, I did not think this was in him.'

'Well, he has a good deal at stake, and that brings it out of a fellow,' said his friend.

It was, however, pouring water upon sand. Any substantial resistance to the measure was from the first out of the question. Lord Chandos accomplished the only important feat, and that was the enfranchisement of the farmers. This perpetual struggle, however, occasioned a vast deal of excitement, and the actors in it often indulged in the wild credulity of impossible expectations. The saloon of Zenobia was ever thronged, and she was never more confident than when the bill passed the Commons. She knew that the King would never give his assent to the bill. His Majesty had had quite enough of going down in hackney coaches to carry revolutions. After all, he was the son of good King George, and the court would save the country, as it had often done before. 'But it will not come to that,' she added. 'The Lords will do their duty.'

'But Lord Waverley tells me,' said Ferrars, 'that there are forty of them who were against the bill last year who will vote for the second reading.'

'Never mind Lord Waverley and such

addlebrains,' said Zenobia, with a smile of triumphant mystery. 'So long as we have the court, the Duke, and Lord Lyndhurst on our side, we can afford to laugh at such conceited poltroons. His mother was my dearest friend, and I know he used to have fits. Look bright,' she continued; 'things never were better. Before a week has passed these people will be nowhere.'

'But how is it possible?'

'Trust me.'

'I always do—and yet——'

'You never were nearer being a cabinet minister,' she said, with a radiant glance.

And Zenobia was right. Though the government, with the aid of the waverers, carried the second reading of the bill, a week afterwards, on May 7, Lord Lyndhurst rallied the waverers again to his standard and carried his famous resolution, that the enfranchising clauses should precede the disfranchisement in the great measure. Lord Grey and his colleagues resigned, and the King sent for Lord Lyndhurst. The bold chief baron advised His Majesty to consult the Duke of

Wellington, and was himself the bearer of the King's message to Apsley House. The Duke found the King 'in great distress,' and he therefore did not hesitate in promising to endeavour to form a ministry.

'Who was right?' said Zenobia to Mr. Ferrars. 'He is so busy he could not write to you, but he told me to tell you to call at Apsley House at twelve to-morrow. You will be in the cabinet.'

'I have got it at last!' said Ferrars to himself. 'It is worth living for and at any peril. All the cares of life sink into insignificance under such circumstances. The difficulties are great, but their very greatness will furnish the means of their solution. The Crown cannot be dragged in the mud, and the Duke was born for conquest.'

A day passed, and another day, and Ferrars was not again summoned. The affair seemed to hang fire. Zenobia was still brave, but Ferrars, who knew her thoroughly, could detect her lurking anxiety. Then she told him in confidence that Sir Robert made difficulties, 'but there is nothing in it,' she

added. 'The Duke has provided for everything, and he means Sir Robert to be Premier. He could not refuse that; it would be almost an act of treason.' Two days after she sent for Mr. Ferrars, early in the morning, and received him in her boudoir. Her countenance was excited, but serious. 'Don't be alarmed,' she said; 'nothing will prevent a government being formed, but Sir Robert has thrown us over; I never had confidence in him. It is most provoking, as Mr. Baring had joined us, and it was such a good name for the City. But the failure of one man is the opportunity of another. We want a leader in the House of Commons. He must be a man who can speak; of experience, who knows the House, its forms, and all that. There is only one man indicated. You cannot doubt about him. I told you honours would be tumbling on your head. You are the man; you are to have one of the highest offices in the cabinet, and lead the House of Commons.'

'Peel declines,' said Ferrars, speaking slowly and shaking his head. 'That is very serious.'

'For himself,' said Zenobia, 'not for you. It makes your fortune.'

'The difficulties seem too great to contend with.'

'What difficulties are there? You have got the court, and you have got the House of Lords. Mr. Pitt was not nearly so well off, for he had never been in office, and had at the same time to fight Lord North and that wicked Mr. Fox, the orator of the day, while you have only got Lord Althorp, who can't order his own dinner.'

'I am in amazement,' said Ferrars, and he seemed plunged in thought.

'But you do not hesitate?'

'No,' he said, looking up dreamily, for he had been lost in abstraction; and speaking in a measured and hollow voice, 'I do not hesitate.' Then resuming a brisk tone he said, 'This is not an age for hesitation; if asked, I will do the deed.'

At this moment there was a tap at the door, and the groom of the chambers brought in a note for Mr. Ferrars, which had been forwarded from his own residence and which

requested his presence at Apsley House. Having read it, he gave it to Zenobia, who exclaimed with delight, 'Do not lose a moment. I am so glad to have got rid of Sir Robert with his doubts and his difficulties. We want new blood.'

That was a wonderful walk for William Ferrars, from St. James' Square to Apsley House. As he moved along, he was testing his courage and capacity for the sharp trials that awaited him. He felt himself not unequal to conjunctures in which he had never previously indulged even in imagination. His had been an ambitious, rather than a soaring spirit. He had never contemplated the possession of power except under the ægis of some commanding chief. Now it was for him to control senates and guide councils. He screwed himself up to the sticking-point. Desperation is sometimes as powerful an inspirer as genius.

The great man was alone,—calm, easy, and courteous. He had sent for Mr. Ferrars, because having had one interview with him, in which his co-operation had been requested in the conduct of affairs, the Duke

thought it was due to him to give him the earliest intimation of the change of circumstances. The vote of the House of Commons on the motion of Lord Ebrington had placed an insurmountable barrier to the formation of a government, and his grace had accordingly relinquished the commission with which he had been entrusted by the King.

CHAPTER IX.

AVAILING himself of his latch-key, Ferrars re-entered his home unnoticed. He went at once to his library, and locked the door of the apartment. There sitting before his desk, he buried his face in his hands and remained in that posture for a considerable time.

They were tumultuous and awful thoughts that passed over his brain. The dreams of a life were dissipated, and he had to encounter the stern reality of his position—and that was Ruin. He was without hope and without resource. His debts were vast; his patrimony was a fable; and the mysterious inheritance of his wife had been tampered with. The elder Ferrars had left an insolvent estate; he had supported his son liberally, but latterly from his son's own resources. The father had made himself the principal trustee of the son's

marriage settlement. His colleague, a relative of the heiress, had died, and care was taken that no one should be substituted in his stead. All this had been discovered by Ferrars on his father's death, but ambition and the excitement of a life of blended elation and peril, had sustained him under the concussion. One by one every chance had vanished : first his private means and then his public prospects ; he had lost office, and now he was about to lose parliament. His whole position so long, and carefully, and skilfully built up seemed to dissolve, and dissipate into insignificant fragments. And now he had to break the situation to his wife. She was to become the unprepared partner of the secret which had gnawed at his heart for years, during which to her his mien had often been smiling and always serene. Mrs. Ferrars was at home, and alone, in her luxurious boudoir, and he went to her at once. After years of dissimulation, now that all was over, Ferrars could not bear the suspense of four-and-twenty hours.

It was difficult to bring her into a mood of mind capable of comprehending a tithe of what she had to learn; and yet the darkest part of the tale she was never to know. Mrs. Ferrars, though singularly intuitive, shrank from controversy, and settled everything by contradiction and assertion. She maintained for a long time that what her husband communicated to her could not be; that it was absurd and even impossible. After a while, she talked of selling her diamonds and reducing her equipages, sacrificing which she assumed would put everything right. And when she found her husband still grave and still intimating that the sacrifices must be beyond all this, and that they must prepare for the life and habits of another social sphere, she became violent, and wept and declared her wrongs; that she had been deceived and outraged and infamously treated.

Remembering how long and with what apparent serenity in her presence he had endured his secret woes, and how one of the principal objects of his life had ever been to

guard her even from a shade of solicitude, even the restrained Ferrars was affected; his countenance changed and his eye became suffused. When she observed this, she suddenly threw her arms round his neck and with many embraces, amid sighs and tears, exclaimed, 'Oh! William, if we love each other, what does anything signify?'

And what could anything signify under such circumstances and on such conditions? As Ferrars pressed his beautiful wife to his heart, he remembered only his early love, which seemed entirely to revive. Unconsciously to himself, too, he was greatly relieved by this burst of tenderness on her part, for the prospect of this interview had been most distressful to him. 'My darling,' he said, 'ours is not a case of common imprudence or misfortune. We are the victims of a revolution, and we must bear our lot as becomes us under such circumstances. Individual misfortunes are merged in the greater catastrophe of the country.'

'That is the true view,' said his wife; 'and, after all, the poor King of France is much worse

off than we are. However, I cannot now buy the Duchesse of Sevres' lace, which I had promised her to do. It is rather awkward. However, the best way always is to speak the truth. I must tell the duchess I am powerless, and that we are the victims of a revolution, like herself.'

Then they began to talk quite cosily together over their prospects, he sitting on the sofa by her side and holding her hand. Mrs. Ferrars would not hear of retiring to the continent. 'No,' she said, with all her sanguine vein returning, 'you always used to say I brought you luck, and I will bring you luck yet. There must be a reaction. The wheel will turn and bring round our friends again. Do not let us then be out of the way. Your claims are immense. They must do something for you. They ought to give you India, and if we only set our mind upon it, we shall get it. Depend upon it, things are not so bad as they seem. What appear to be calamities are often the sources of fortune. I would much sooner that you should be Governor-General than a cabinet minister. That

odious House of Commons is very wearisome. I am not sure any constitution can bear it very long. I am not sure whether I would not prefer being Governor-General of India even to being Prime Minister.'

CHAPTER X.

In consequence of the registration under the Reform Act it was not possible for parliament to be dissolved, and an appeal made to the new constituency, until the end of the year. This was advantageous to Mr. Ferrars, and afforded him six months of personal security to arrange his affairs. Both husband and wife were proud, and were anxious to quit the world with dignity. All were so busy about themselves at that period, and the vicissitudes of life between continental revolutions and English reform so various and extensive, that it was not difficult to avoid the scrutiny of society. Mrs. Ferrars broke to Zenobia that, as her husband was no longer to be in parliament, they had resolved to retire for some time to a country life, though, as Mr. Ferrars had at length succeeded in impressing on his

wife that their future income was to be counted by hundreds, instead of thousands, it was difficult for her to realise a rural establishment that should combine dignity and economy. Without, however, absolutely alleging the cause, she contrived to baffle the various propositions of this kind which the energetic Zenobia made to her, and while she listened with apparent interest to accounts of deer parks, and expensive shooting, and delightful neighbourhoods, would just exclaim, 'Charming! but rather more, I fancy, than we require, for we mean to be very quiet till my girl is presented.'

That young lady was now thirteen, and though her parents were careful to say nothing in her presence which would materially reveal their real situation, for which they intended very gradually to prepare her, the scrutinising powers with which nature had prodigally invested their daughter were not easily baffled. She asked no questions, but nothing seemed to escape the penetrative glance of that dark blue eye, calm amid all the mystery, and tolerating rather than sharing the frequent

embrace of her parents. After a while her brother came home from Eton, to which he was never to return. A few days before this event she became unusually restless, and even agitated. When he arrived, neither Mr. nor Mrs. Ferrars was at home. He knocked gaily at the door, a schoolboy's knock, and was hardly in the hall, when his name was called, and he caught the face of his sister, leaning over the balustrade of the landing-place. He ran upstairs with wondrous speed, and was in an instant locked in her arms. She kissed him and kissed him again, and when he tried to speak, she stopped his mouth with kisses. And then she said, 'Something has happened. What it is I cannot make out, but we are to have no more ponies.'

CHAPTER XI.

At the foot of the Berkshire downs, and itself on a gentle elevation, there is an old hall with gable ends and lattice windows, standing in grounds which once were stately, and where there are yet glade-like terraces of yew trees, which give an air of dignity to a neglected scene. In the front of the hall huge gates of iron, highly wrought, and bearing an ancient date as well as the shield of a noble house, opened on a village green, round which were clustered the cottages of the parish with only one exception, and that was the vicarage house, a modern building, not without taste, and surrounded by a small but brilliant garden. The church was contiguous to the hall, and had been raised by the lord on a portion of his domain. Behind the hall and its enclosure, the country was common land

but picturesque. It had once been a beech forest, and though the timber had been greatly cleared, the green land was still occasionally dotted, sometimes with groups and sometimes with single trees, while the juniper which here abounded, and rose to a great height, gave a rich wildness to the scene, and sustained its forest character.

Hurstley had for many years been deserted by the family to which it belonged. Indeed, it was rather difficult to say to whom it did belong. A dreary fate had awaited an ancient, and, in its time, even not immemorable home. It had fallen into chancery, and for the last half-century had either been uninhabited or let to strangers. Mr. Ferrars' lawyer was in the chancery suit, and knew all about it. The difficulty of finding a tenant for such a place, never easy, was increased by its remoteness from any railway communication, which was now beginning to figure as an important element in such arrangements. The Master in Chancery would be satisfied with a nominal rent, provided only he could obtain a family of consideration to hold under him. Mr.

Ferrars was persuaded to go down alone to reconnoitre the place. It pleased him. It was aristocratic, yet singularly inexpensive. The house contained an immense hall, which reached the roof, and which would have become a baronial mansion, and a vast staircase in keeping; but the living rooms were moderate, even small, in dimensions, and not numerous. The land he was expected to take consisted only of a few meadows, which he could let if necessary, and a single labourer could manage the garden.

Mrs. Ferrars was so delighted with the description of the galleried hall, that she resolved on their taking Hurstley without even her previously visiting it. The only things she cared for in the country were a hall and a pony-chair.

All the carriages were sold, and all the servants discharged. Two or three maid-servants and a man who must be found in the country, who could attend them at table, and valet alike his master and the pony, was the establishment which was to succeed the crowd of retainers who had so long lounged away

their lives in the saloons of Hill Street, and the groves and gardens of Wimbledon.

Mr. and Mrs. Ferrars and their daughter travelled down to Hurstley in a post-chaise ; Endymion, with the servants, was sent by the stage-coach, which accomplished the journey of sixty miles in ten hours. Myra said little during the journey, but an expression of ineffable contempt and disgust seemed permanent on her countenance. Sometimes she shrugged her shoulders, sometimes she raised her eyebrows, and sometimes she turned up her nose. And then she gave a sigh ; but it was a sigh not of sorrow, but of impatience. Her parents lavished attentions on her which she accepted without recognition, only occasionally observing that she wished she had gone with Endymion.

It was dusk when they arrived at Hurstley, and the melancholy hour did not tend to raise their spirits. However, the gardener's wife had lit a good fire of beech-wood in the drawing-room, and threw as they entered a pannier of cones upon the logs, which crackled and cheerfully blazed away. Even Myra

seemed interested by the novelty of the wood fire and the iron dogs. She remained by their side looking abstractedly on the expiring logs, while her parents wandered about the house and examined or prepared the requisite arrangements. While they were yet absent, there was some noise and a considerable bustle in the hall. Endymion and his retinue had arrived. Then Myra immediately roused herself, and listened like a startled deer. But the moment she caught his voice, an expression of rapture suffused her countenance. It beamed with vivacity and delight. She rushed away, pushed through the servants and the luggage, embraced him and said, 'We will go over the house and see our rooms together.'

Wandering without a guide and making many mistakes, fortunately they soon met their parents. Mrs. Ferrars good-naturedly recommenced her labours of inspection, and explained all her plans. There was a very pretty room for Endymion, and to-morrow it was to be very comfortable. He was quite pleased. Then they were shown Myra's room, but she said nothing, standing by with a sweet scoff,

as it were, lingering on her lips, while her mother disserted on all the excellences of the chamber. Then they were summoned to tea. The gardener's wife was quite a leading spirit, and had prepared everything; the curtains were drawn, and the room lighted; an urn hissed; there were piles of bread and butter and a pyramid of buttered toast. It was wonderful what an air of comfort had been conjured up in this dreary mansion, and it was impossible for the travellers, however wearied or chagrined, to be insensible to the convenience and cheerfulness of all around them.

When the meal was over, the children sate together in whispering tattle. Mrs. Ferrars had left the room to see if all was ready for their hour of retirement, and Mr. Ferrars was walking up and down the room, absorbed in thought.

'What do you think of it all, Endymion?' whispered Myra to her twin.

'I rather like it,' he replied.

She looked at him with a glance of blended love and mockery, and then she said in his ear, 'I feel as if we had fallen from some star.'

CHAPTER XII.

THE morrow brought a bright autumnal morn, and everyone woke, if not happy, interested. There was much to see and much to do. The dew was so heavy that the children were not allowed to quit the broad gravel walk that bounded one side of the old house, but they caught enticing vistas of the gleamy glades, and the abounding light and shade softened and adorned everything. Every sight and sound too was novel, and from the rabbit that started out of the grove, stared at them and then disappeared, to the jays chattering in the more distant woods, all was wonderment at least for a week. They saw squirrels for the first time, and for the first time beheld a hedgehog. Their parents were busy in the house; Mr. Ferrars unpacking and settling

his books, and his wife arranging some few articles of ornamental furniture that had been saved from the London wreck and rendering their usual room of residence as refined as was in her power. It is astonishing how much effect a woman of taste can produce with a pretty chair or two full of fancy and colour, a table clothed with a few books, some family miniatures, a workbag of rich material, and some toys that we never desert. 'I have not much to work with,' said Mrs. Ferrars, with a sigh, 'but I think the colouring is pretty.'

On the second day after their arrival, the rector and his wife made them a visit. Mr. Penruddock was a naturalist, and had written the history of his parish. He had escaped being an Oxford don by being preferred early to this college living, but he had married the daughter of a don, who appreciated the grand manners of their new acquaintances, and who, when she had overcome their first rather awe-inspiring impression, became communicative and amused them much with her details respecting the little world in which they were now to live. She could not conceal her

wonderment at the beauty of the twins, though they were no longer habited in those dresses which had once astonished even Mayfair.

Part of the scheme of the new life was the education of the children by their parents. Mr. Ferrars had been a distinguished scholar, and was still a good one. He was patient and methodical, and deeply interested in his contemplated task. So far as disposition was concerned the pupil was not disappointing. Endymion was of an affectionate disposition and inclined to treat his father with deference. He was gentle and docile; but he did not acquire knowledge with facility, and was remarkably deficient in that previous information on which his father counted. The other pupil was of a different temperament. She learned with a glance, and remembered with extraordinary tenacity everything she had acquired. But she was neither tender nor deferential, and to induce her to study you could not depend on the affections, but only on her intelligence. So she was often fitful, capricious, or provoking, and her

mother, who, though accomplished and eager, had neither the method nor the self-restraint of Mr. Ferrars, was often annoyed and irritable. Then there were scenes, or rather ebullitions on one side, for Myra was always unmoved and enraging from her total want of sensibility. Sometimes it became necessary to appeal to Mr. Ferrars, and her manner to her father, though devoid of feeling, was at least not contemptuous. Nevertheless, on the whole the scheme, as time went on, promised to be not unsuccessful. Endymion, though not rapidly, advanced surely, and made some amends for the years that had been wasted in fashionable private schools and the then frivolity of Eton. Myra, who, notwithstanding her early days of indulgence, had enjoyed the advantage of admirable governesses, was well grounded in more than one modern language, and she soon mastered them. And in due time, though much after the period on which we are now touching, she announced her desire to become acquainted with German, in those days a much rarer acquirement than at present. Her mother could not help her in

this respect, and that was perhaps an additional reason for the study of this tongue, for Myra was impatient of tuition, and not unjustly full of self-confidence. She took also the keenest interest in the progress of her brother, made herself acquainted with all his lessons, and sometimes helped him in their achievement.

Though they had absolutely no acquaintance of any kind except the rector and his family, life was not dull. Mr. Ferrars was always employed, for besides the education of his children, he had systematically resumed a habit in which he had before occasionally indulged, and that was political composition. He had in his lofty days been the author of more than one essay, in the most celebrated periodical publication of the Tories, which had commanded attention and obtained celebrity. Many a public man of high rank and reputation, and even more than one Prime Minister, had contributed in their time to its famous pages, but never without being paid. It was the organic law of this publication, that gratuitous contributions should never be

admitted. And in this principle there was as much wisdom as pride. Celebrated statesmen would point with complacency to the snuff-box or the picture which had been purchased by their literary labour, and there was more than one bracelet on the arm of Mrs. Ferrars, and more than one genet in her stable, which had been the reward of a profound or a slashing article by William.

What had been the occasional diversion of political life was now to be the source of regular income. Though living in profound solitude, Ferrars had a vast sum of political experience to draw upon, and though his training and general intelligence were in reality too exclusive and academical for the stirring age which had now opened, and on which he had unhappily fallen, they nevertheless suited the audience to which they were particularly addressed. His Corinthian style, in which the Mænad of Mr. Burke was habited in the last mode of Almack's, his sarcasms against the illiterate and his invectives against the low, his descriptions of the country life of the aristocracy contrasted with the horrors of the

guillotine, his Horatian allusions and his Virgilian passages, combined to produce a whole which equally fascinated and alarmed his readers.

These contributions occasioned some communications with the editor or publisher of the Review, which were not without interest. Parcels came down by the coach, inclosing not merely proof sheets, but frequently new books—the pamphlet of the hour before it was published, or a volume of discoveries in unknown lands. It was a link to the world they had quitted without any painful associations. Otherwise their communications with the outer world were slight and rare. It is difficult for us who live in an age of railroads, telegraphs, penny posts and penny newspapers, to realise how uneventful, how limited in thought and feeling, as well as in incident, was the life of an English family of retired habits and limited means, only forty years ago. The whole world seemed to be morally, as well as materially, 'adscripti glebæ.'

Mr. and Mrs. Ferrars did not wish to move, but had they so wished, it would have been

under any circumstances for them a laborious and costly affair. The only newspaper they saw was the 'Evening Mail,' which arrived three times a week, and was the 'Times' newspaper with all its contents except its advertisements. As the 'Times' newspaper had the credit of mainly contributing to the passing of Lord Grey's Reform Bill, and was then whispered to enjoy the incredible sale of twelve thousand copies daily, Mr. Ferrars assumed that in its columns he would trace the most authentic intimations of coming events. The cost of postage was then so heavy, that domestic correspondence was necessarily very restricted. But this vexatious limitation hardly applied to the Ferrars. They had never paid postage. They were born and had always lived in the franking world, and although Mr. Ferrars had now himself lost the privilege, both official and parliamentary, still all their correspondents were frankers, and they addressed their replies without compunction to those who were free. Nevertheless, it was astonishing how little in their new life they cared to avail themselves of this cor-

respondence. At first, Zenobia wrote every week, almost every day, to Mrs. Ferrars, but after a time Mrs. Ferrars, though at first pleased by the attention, felt its recognition a burthen. Then Zenobia, who at length, for the first time in her life, had taken a gloomy view of affairs, relapsed into a long silence, and in fact had nearly forgotten the Ferrars, for, as she herself used to say, 'How can one recollect people whom one never meets?'

In the meantime, for we have been a little anticipating in our last remarks, the family at Hurstley were much pleased with the country they now inhabited. They made excursions of discovery into the interior of their world, Mrs. Ferrars and Myra in the pony chair, her husband and Endymion walking by their side, and Endymion sometimes taking his sister's seat against his wish, but in deference to her irresistible will. Even Myra could hardly be insensible to the sylvan wildness of the old chase, and the romantic villages in the wooded clefts of the downs. As for Endymion he was delighted, and it seemed to him, perhaps he unconsciously felt it, that this larger and

more frequent experience of nature was a compensation for much which they had lost.

After a time, when they had become a little acquainted with their simple neighbourhood, and the first impression of wildness and novelty had worn out, the twins were permitted to walk together alone, though within certain limits. The village and its vicinity was quite free, but they were not permitted to enter the woods, and not to wander on the chase out of sight of the mansion. These walks alone with Endymion were the greatest pleasure of his sister. She delighted to make him tell her of his life at Eton, and if she ever sighed it was when she lamented that his residence there had been so short. Then they found an inexhaustible fund of interest and sympathy in the past. They wondered if they ever should have ponies again. 'I think not,' said Myra, 'and yet how merry to scamper together over this chase!'

'But they would not let us go,' said Endymion, 'without a groom.'

'A groom!' exclaimed Myra, with an elfish laugh; 'I believe, if the truth were really

known, we ought to be making our own beds and washing our own dinner plates.'

'And are you sorry, Myra, for all that has happened?' asked Endymion.

'I hardly know what has happened. They keep it very close. But I am too astonished to be sorry. Besides, what is the use of whimpering?'

'I cried very much one day,' said Endymion.

'Ah! you are soft, dear darling. I never cried in my life, except once with rage.'

At Christmas a new character appeared on the stage, the rector's son, Nigel. He had completed a year with a private tutor, and was on the eve of commencing his first term at Oxford, being eighteen, nearly five years older than the twins. He was tall, with a countenance of remarkable intelligence and power, though still softened by the innocence and bloom of boyhood. He was destined to be a clergyman. The twins were often thrown into his society, for though too old to be their mere companion, his presence was an excuse for Mrs. Penruddock more frequently joining

them in their strolls, and under her auspices their wanderings had no limit, except the shortness of the days; but they found some compensation for this in their frequent visits to the rectory, which was a cheerful and agreeable home, full of stuffed birds, and dried plants, and marvellous fishes, and other innocent trophies and triumphs over nature.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE tenant of the Manor Farm was a good specimen of his class; a thorough Saxon, ruddy and bright visaged, with an athletic though rather bulky frame, hardened by exposure to the seasons and constant exercise. Although he was the tenant of several hundred acres, he had an eye to the main chance in little things, which is a characteristic of farmers, but he was good-natured and obliging, and while he foraged their pony, furnished their woodyard with logs and faggots, and supplied them from his dairy, he gratuitously performed for the family at the hall many other offices which tended to their comfort and convenience, but which cost him nothing.

Mr. Ferrars liked to have a chat every now and then with Farmer Thornberry, who had a shrewd and idiomatic style of expressing

his limited, but in its way complete, experience of men and things, which was amusing and interesting to a man of the world whose knowledge of rural life was mainly derived from grand shooting parties at great houses.

The pride and torment of Farmer Thornberry's life was his only child, Job.

'I gave him the best of educations,' said the farmer; 'he had a much better chance than I had myself, for I do not pretend to be a scholar, and never was; and yet I cannot make head or tail of him. I wish you would speak to him some day, sir. He goes against the land, and yet we have been on it for three generations, and have nothing to complain of; and he is a good farmer too, is Job, none better; a little too fond of experimenting, but then he is young. But I am very much afraid he will leave me. I think it is this new thing the big-wigs have set up in London that has put him wrong, for he is always reading their papers.'

'And what is that?' said Mr. Ferrars.

'Well, they call themselves the Society

for the Diffusion of Knowledge, and Lord Brougham is at the head of it.'

'Ah! he is a dangerous man,' said Mr. Ferrars.

'Do you know, I think he is,' said Farmer Thornberry, very seriously, 'and by this token, —he says a knowledge of chemistry is necessary for the cultivation of the soil.'

'Brougham is a man who would say anything,' said Mr. Ferrars, 'and of one thing you may be quite certain, that there is no subject which Lord Brougham knows thoroughly. I have proved that, and if you ever have time some winter evening to read something on the matter, I will lend you a number of the 'Quarterly Review,' which might interest you.'

'I wish you would lend it to Job,' said the farmer.

Mr. Ferrars found Job not so manageable in controversy as his father. His views were peculiar, and his conclusions certain. He had more than a smattering too of political economy, a kind of knowledge which Mr. Ferrars viewed with suspicion; for though he had him-

self been looked upon as enlightened in this respect in the last years of Lord Liverpool, when Lord Wallace and Mr. Huskisson were astonishing the world, he had relapsed, after the schism of the Tory party, into orthodoxy, and was satisfied that the tenets of the economists were mere theories, or could only be reduced into practice by revolution.

'But it is a pleasant life, that of a farmer,' said Mr. Ferrars to Job.

'Yes, but life should be something more than pleasant,' said Job, who always looked discontented; 'an ox in a pasture has a pleasant life.'

'Well, and why should it not be a profitable one, too?' said Mr. Ferrars.

'I do not see my way to that,' said Job, moodily; 'there is not much to be got out of the land at any time, and still less on the terms we hold it.'

'But you are not high-rented!'

'Oh, rent is nothing, if everything else were right, but nothing is right,' said Job. 'In the first place, a farmer is the only trader who has no security for his capital.'

'Ah! you want a lease?'

'I should be very sorry to have a lease like any that I have seen,' replied Job. 'We had one once in our family, and we keep it as a curiosity. It is ten skins long, and more tyrannical nonsense was never engrossed by man.'

'But your family, I believe, has been on this estate for generations now,' said Mr. Ferrars, 'and they have done well.'

'They have done about as well as their stock. They have existed,' said Job; 'nothing more.'

'Your father always gives me quite the idea of a prosperous man,' said Mr. Ferrars.

'Whether he be or not I am sure I cannot say,' said Job; 'for as neither he nor any of his predecessors ever kept any accounts, it is rather difficult to ascertain their exact condition. So long as he has money enough in his pocket to pay his labourers and buy a little stock, my father, like every British farmer, is content. The fact is, he is a serf as much as his men, and until we get rid of feudalism he will remain so.'

'These are strong opinions,' said Mr. Ferrars, drawing himself up, and looking a little cold.

'Yes, but they will make their way,' said Job. 'So far as I myself am concerned, I do not much care what happens to the land, for I do not mean to remain on it; but I care for the country. For the sake of the country I should like to see the whole thing upset.'

'What thing?' asked Mr. Ferrars.

'Feudalism,' said Job. 'I should like to see this estate managed on the same principles as they do their great establishments in the north of England. Instead of feudalism, I would substitute the commercial principle. I would have long leases without covenants; no useless timber, and no game.'

'Why, you would destroy the country,' said Mr. Ferrars.

'We owe everything to the large towns,' said Job.

'The people in the large towns are miserable,' said Mr. Ferrars.

They cannot be more miserable than the people in the country,' said Job.

'Their wretchedness is notorious,' said Mr. Ferrars. 'Look at their riots.'

'Well, we had Swing in the country only two or three years ago.'

Mr. Ferrars looked sad. The reminiscence was too near and too fatal. After a pause he said with an air of decision, and as if imparting a state secret, 'If it were not for the agricultural districts, the King's army could not be recruited.'

'Well, that would not break my heart,' said Job.

'Why, my good fellow, you are a Radical!'

'They may call me what they like,' said Job; 'but it will not alter matters. However, I am going among the Radicals soon, and then I shall know what they are.'

'And can you leave your truly respectable parent?' said Mr. Ferrars rather solemnly, for he remembered his promise to Farmer Thornberry to speak seriously to his son.

'Oh! my respectable parent will do very well without me, sir. Only let him be able

to drive into Bamford on market day, and get two or three linendrapers to take their hats off to him, and he will be happy enough, and always ready to die for our glorious Constitution.'

CHAPTER XIV

EIGHTEEN HUNDRED AND THIRTY-TWO, the darkest and most distressing year in the life of Mr. Ferrars, closed in comparative calm and apparent content. He was himself greatly altered, both in manner and appearance. He was kind and gentle, but he was silent, and rarely smiled. His hair was grizzled, and he began to stoop. But he was always employed, and was interested in his labours.

His sanguine wife bore up against their misfortunes with far more animation. She was at first amused with her new life, and when she was accustomed to it, she found a never-failing resource in her conviction of a coming reaction. Mrs. Ferrars possessed most feminine qualities, and many of them in excess. She could not reason, but her intuition was remarkable. She was of opinion that 'these

people never could go on,' and that they must necessarily be succeeded by William and his friends. In vain her husband, when she pressed her views and convictions on him, would shake his head over the unprecedented majority of the government, and sigh while he acknowledged that the Tories absolutely did not now command one-fifth of the House of Commons; his shakes and sighs were equally disregarded by her, and she persisted in her dreams of riding upon elephants.

After all Mrs. Ferrars was right. There is nothing more remarkable in political history than the sudden break-up of the Whig party after their successful revolution of 1832. It is one of the most striking instances on record of all the elements of political power being useless without a commanding individual will. During the second year of their exile in the Berkshire hills, affairs looked so black that it seemed no change could occur except further and more calamitous revolution. Zenobia went to Vienna that she might breathe the atmosphere of law and order, and hinted to Mrs. Ferrars that probably she

should never return—at least not until Parliament met, when she trusted the House of Lords, if they were not abolished in the interval, would save the country. And yet at the commencement of the following year an old colleague of Mr. Ferrars apprised him, in the darkest and the deepest confidence, that 'there was a screw loose,' and he must 'look out for squalls.'

In the meantime Mr. Ferrars increased and established his claims on his party, if they ever did rally, by his masterly articles in their great Review, which circumstances favoured, and which kept up that increasing feeling of terror and despair which then was deemed necessary to the advancement of Conservative opinions.

At home a year and more had elapsed without change. The occasional appearance of Nigel Penruddock was the only event. It was to all a pleasing, and to some of the family a deeply interesting, one. Nigel, though a student and devoted to the holy profession for which he was destined, was also a sportsman. His Christianity was muscular, and Endymion,

to whom he had taken a fancy, became the companion of his pastimes. All the shooting of the estate was at Nigel's command, but as there were no keepers, it was of course very rough work. Still it was a novel and animating life for Endymion; and though the sport was slight, the pursuit was keen. Then Nigel was a great fisherman, and here their efforts had a surer return, for they dwelt in a land of trout streams, and in their vicinity was a not inconsiderable river. It was an adventure of delight to pursue some of these streams to their source, throwing, as they rambled on, the fly in the rippling waters. Myra, too, took some pleasure in these fishing expeditions, carrying their luncheon and a German book in her wallet, and sitting quietly on the bank for hours, when they had fixed upon some favoured pool for a prolonged campaign.

Every time that Nigel returned home, a difference, and a striking difference, was observed in him. His person, of course, became more manly, his manner more assured, his dress more modish. It was impossible to

deny that he was extremely good-looking, interesting in his discourse, and distinguished in his appearance. Endymion idolised him. Nigel was his model. He imitated his manner, caught the tone of his voice, and began to give opinions on subjects, sacred and profane.

After a hard morning's march, one day, as they were lolling on the turf amid the old beeches and the juniper, Nigel said—

'What does Mr. Ferrars mean you to be, Endymion?'

'I do not know,' said Endymion, looking perplexed.

'But I suppose you are to be something?'

'Yes; I suppose I must be something; because papa has lost his fortune.'

'And what would you like to be?'

'I never thought about it,' said Endymion.

'In my opinion there is only one thing for a man to be in this age,' said Nigel peremptorily; 'he should go into the Church.'

'The Church!' said Endymion.

'There will soon be nothing else left,' said Nigel. 'The Church must last for ever. It is built upon a rock. It was founded by God; all other governments have been founded by men. When they are destroyed, and the process of destruction seems rapid, there will be nothing left to govern mankind except the Church.'

'Indeed!' said Endymion; 'papa is very much in favour of the Church, and, I know, is writing something about it.'

'Yes, but Mr. Ferrars is an Erastian,' said Nigel; 'you need not tell him I said so, but he is one. He wants the Church to be the servant of the State, and all that sort of thing, but that will not do any longer. This destruction of the Irish bishoprics has brought affairs to a crisis. No human power has the right to destroy a bishopric. It is a divinely ordained office, and when a diocese is once established, it is eternal.'

'I see,' said Endymion, much interested.

'I wish,' continued Nigel, 'you were two or three years older, and Mr. Ferrars could send you to Oxford. That is the place to

understand these things, and they will soon be the only things to understand. The rector knows nothing about them. My father is thoroughly high and dry, and has not the slightest idea of Church principles.'

'Indeed!' said Endymion.

'It is quite a new set even at Oxford,' continued Nigel; 'but their principles are as old as the Apostles, and come down from them, straight.'

'That is a long time ago,' said Endymion.

'I have a great fancy,' continued Nigel, without apparently attending to him, 'to give you a thorough Church education. It would be the making of you. You would then have a purpose in life, and never be in doubt or perplexity on any subject. We ought to move heaven and earth to induce Mr. Ferrars to send you to Oxford.'

'I will speak to Myra about it,' said Endymion.

'I said something of this to your sister the other day,' said Nigel, 'but I fear she is terribly Erastian. However, I will give you something to read. It is not very long, but you

can read it at your leisure, and then we will talk over it afterwards, and perhaps I may give you something else.'

Endymion did not fail to give a report of this conversation and similar ones to his sister, for he was in the habit of telling her everything. She listened with attention, but not with interest, to his story. Her expression was kind, but hardly serious. Her wondrous eyes gave him a glance of blended mockery and affection. 'Dear darling,' she said, 'if you are to be a clergyman, I should like you to be a cardinal.'

CHAPTER XV

THE dark deep hints that had reached Mr. Ferrars at the beginning of 1834 were the harbingers of startling events. In the spring it began to be rumoured among the initiated, that the mighty Reform Cabinet with its colossal majority, and its testimonial goblets of gold, raised by the penny subscriptions of a grateful people, was in convulsions, and before the month of July had elapsed Lord Grey had resigned, under circumstances which exhibited the entire demoralisation of his party. Except Zenobia, everyone was of opinion that the King acted wisely in entrusting the reconstruction of the Whig ministry to his late Secretary of State, Lord Melbourne. Nevertheless it could no longer be concealed, nay, it was invariably admitted, that the political situation had been largely and most

unexpectedly changed, and that there was a prospect, dim, perhaps, yet not undefinable, of the conduct of public affairs again falling to the alternate management of two rival constitutional parties.

Zenobia was so full of hope, and almost of triumph, that she induced her lord in the autumn to assemble their political friends at one of his great seats, and Mr. and Mrs. Ferrars were urgently invited to join the party. But, after some hesitation, they declined this proposal. Had Mr. Ferrars been as sanguine as his wife, he would perhaps have overcome his strong disinclination to re-enter the world, but though no longer despairing of a Tory revival, he was of opinion that a considerable period, even several years, must elapse before its occurrence. Strange to say, he found no difficulty in following his own humour through any contrary disposition on the part of Mrs. Ferrars. With all her ambition and passionate love of society, she was unwilling to return to that stage, where she once had blazed, in a subdued and almost subordinate position. In fact, it was

an affair of the wardrobe. The queen of costumes, whose fanciful and gorgeous attire even Zenobia was wont to praise, could not endure a reappearance in old dresses. 'I do not so much care about my jewels, William,' she said to her husband, 'but one must have new dresses.'

It was a still mild day in November, a month which in the country, and especially on the light soils, has many charms, and the whole Ferrars family were returning home after an afternoon ramble on the chase. The leaf had changed but had not fallen, and the vast spiral masses of the dark green juniper effectively contrasted with the rich brown foliage of the beech, varied occasionally by the scarlet leaves of the wild cherry tree, that always mingles with these woods. Around the house were some lime trees of large size, and at this period of the year, their foliage, still perfect, was literally quite golden. They seemed like trees in some fairy tale of imprisoned princesses or wandering cavaliers, and such they would remain, until the fatal night that brings the first frost.

'There is a parcel from London,' said the servant to Mr. Ferrars, as they entered the house. 'It is on your desk.'

A parcel from London was one of the great events of their life. What could it be? Perhaps some proofs, probably some books. Mr. Ferrars entered his room alone. It was a very small brown paper parcel, evidently not books. He opened it hastily, and disencumbered its contents of several coverings. The contents took the form of a letter—a single letter.

The handwriting was recognised and he read the letter with an agitated countenance, and then he opened the door of his room, and called loudly for his wife, who was by his side in a few moments.

'A letter, my love, from Barron,' he cried. 'The King has dismissed Lord Melbourne and sent for the Duke of Wellington, who has accepted the conduct of affairs.'

'You must go to town directly,' said his wife. 'He offered you the Cabinet in 1832. No person has such a strong claim on him as you have.'

'It does not appear that he is exactly prime minister,' said Mr. Ferrars, looking again at the letter. 'They have sent for Peel, who is at Rome, but the Duke is to conduct the government till he arrives.'

'You must go to town immediately,' repeated Mrs. Ferrars. 'There is not a moment to be lost. Send down to the Horse Shoe and secure an inside place in the Salisbury coach. It reaches this place at nine to-morrow morning. I will have everything ready. You must take a portmanteau and a carpet-bag. I wonder if you could get a bedroom at the Rodneys' It would be so nice to be among old friends; they must feel for you. And then it will be near the Carlton, which is a great thing. I wonder how he will form his cabinet. What a pity he is not here!'

'It is a wonderful event, but the difficulties must be immense,' observed Ferrars.

'Oh! you always see difficulties. I see none. The King is with us, the country is disgusted. It is what I always said would be; the reaction is complete.'

'Well, we had better now go and tell the

children,' said Ferrars. 'I leave you all here for the first time,' and he seemed to sigh.

'Well, I hope we shall soon join you,' said Mrs. Ferrars. 'It is the very best time for hiring a house. What I have set my heart upon is the Green Park. It will be near your office and not too near. I am sure I could not live again in a street.'

The children were informed that public events of importance had occurred, that the King had changed his ministry, and that papa must go up to town immediately and see the Duke of Wellington. The eyes of Mrs. Ferrars danced with excitement as she communicated to them all this intelligence, and much more, with a volubility in which of late years she had rarely indulged. Mr. Ferrars looked grave and said little. Then he patted Endymion on the head and kissed Myra, who returned his embrace with a warmth unusual with her.

The whole household soon became in a state of bustle with the preparations for the early departure of Mr. Ferrars. It seemed difficult to comprehend how filling a port-

manteau and a carpet-bag could induce such excited and continuous exertions. But then there was so much to remember, and then there was always something forgotten. Mrs. Ferrars was in her bedroom surrounded by all her maids; Mr. Ferrars was in his study looking out some papers which it was necessary to take with him. The children were alone.

'I wonder if we shall be restored to our greatness,' said Myra to Endymion.

'Well, I shall be sorry to leave the old place; I have been happy here.'

'I have not,' said Myra; 'and I do not think I could have borne this life had it not been for you.'

'It will be a wonderful change,' said Endymion.

'If it come; I fear papa is not daring enough. However, if we get out of this hole, it will be something.'

Tea-time brought them all together again, but when the meal was over, none of the usual occupations of the evening were pursued; no work, no books, no reading aloud. Mr. Ferrars

was to get up very early, and that was a reason for all retiring soon. And yet neither the husband nor the wife really cared to sleep. Mrs. Ferrars sate by the fire in his dressing-room, speculating on all possible combinations, and infusing into him all her suggestions and all her schemes. She was still prudent and still would have preferred a great government —India if possible; but had made up her mind that he must accept the cabinet. Considering what had occurred in 1832, she thought he was bound in honour to do so. Her husband listened rather than conversed, and seemed lost in thought. At last he rose and, embracing her with much affection, said, 'You forget I am to rise with the lark. I shall write to you every day. Best and dearest of women, you have always been right, and all my good fortune has come from you.'

CHAPTER XVI.

It was a very tedious journey, and it took the whole day to accomplish a distance which a rapid express train now can achieve in an hour. The coach carried six inside passengers, and they had to dine on the road. All the passengers were strangers to Mr. Ferrars, and he was by them unknown ; one of them purchased, though with difficulty, a second edition of the 'Times' as they approached London, and favoured his fellow travellers with the news of the change of ministry. There was much excitement, and the purchaser of the paper gave it as his opinion, 'that it was an intrigue of the Court and the Tories, and would never do.' Another modestly intimated that he thought there was a decided reaction. A third announced that England would never submit to be governed by O'Connell.

As the gloom of evening descended, Mr. Ferrars felt depressed. Though his life at Hurstley had been pensive and melancholy, he felt now the charm and the want of that sweet domestic distraction which had often prevented his mind from overbrooding, and had softened life by sympathy in little things. Nor was it without emotion that he found himself again in London, that proud city where once he had himself been so proud. The streets were lighted, and seemed swarming with an infinite population, and the coach finally stopped at a great inn in the Strand, where Mr. Ferrars thought it prudent to secure accommodation for the night. It was too late to look after the Rodneys, but in deference to the strict injunction of Mrs. Ferrars, he paid them a visit next morning on his way to his political chief.

In the days of the great modistes, when an English lady might absolutely be dressed in London, the most celebrated mantua-maker in that city was Madame Euphrosyne. She was as fascinating as she was fashionable. She was so graceful, her manners were so

pretty, so natural, and so insinuating! She took so lively an interest in her clients—her very heart was in their good looks. She was a great favourite of Mrs. Ferrars, and that lady of Madame Euphrosyne. She assured Mrs. Ferrars that she was prouder of dressing Mrs. Ferrars than all the other fine ladies in London together, and Mrs. Ferrars believed her. Unfortunately, while in the way of making a large fortune, Madame Euphrosyne, who was romantic, fell in love with, and married, a very handsome and worthless husband, whose good looks had obtained for him a position in the company of Drury Lane Theatre, then a place of refined resort, which his abilities did not justify. After pillaging and plundering his wife for many years, he finally involved her in such engagements, that she had to take refuge in the Bankruptcy Court. Her business was ruined, and her spirit was broken, and she died shortly after of adversity and chagrin. Her daughter Sylvia was then eighteen, and had inherited with the grace of her mother the beauty of her less reputable parent. Her figure was slight

and undulating, and she was always exquisitely dressed. A brilliant complexion set off to advantage her delicate features, which, though serene, were not devoid of a certain expression of archness. Her white hands were delicate, her light eyes inclined to merriment, and her nose quite a gem, though a little turned up.

After their ruin, her profligate father told her that her face was her fortune, and that she must provide for herself, in which she would find no difficulty. But Sylvia, though she had never enjoyed the advantage of any training, moral or religious, had no bad impulses even if she had no good ones, was of a rather cold character, and extremely prudent. She recoiled from the life of riot, and disorder, and irregularity, in which she had unwittingly passed her days, and which had terminated so tragically, and she resolved to make an effort to secure for herself a different career. She had heard that Mrs. Ferrars was in want of an attendant, and she determined to apply for the post. As one of the chief customers of her mother, Sylvia had been in

the frequent habit of waiting on that lady, with whom she had become a favourite. She was so pretty, and the only person who could fit Mrs. Ferrars. Her appeal, therefore, was not in vain; it was more than successful. Mrs. Ferrars was attracted by Sylvia. Mrs. Ferrars was magnificent, generous, and she liked to be a patroness and to be surrounded by favourites. She determined that Sylvia should not sink into a menial position; she adopted her as a humble friend, and one who every day became more regarded by her. Sylvia arranged her invitations to her receptions, a task which required finish and precision; sometimes wrote her notes. She spoke and wrote French, too, and that was useful, was a musician, and had a pretty voice. Above all, she was a first-rate counsellor in costume; and so, looking also after Mrs. Ferrars' dogs and birds, she became almost one of the family; dined with them often when they were alone, and was frequently Mrs. Ferrars' companion in her carriage.

Sylvia, though not by nature impulsive, really adored her patroness. She governed

her manners and she modelled her dress on that great original, and, next to Mrs. Ferrars, Sylvia in time became nearly the finest lady in London. There was, indeed, much in Mrs Ferrars to captivate a person like Sylvia. Mrs. Ferrars was beautiful, fashionable, gorgeous, wonderfully expensive, and, where her taste was pleased, profusely generous. Her winning manner was not less irresistible because it was sometimes uncertain, and she had the art of being intimate without being familiar.

When the crash came, Sylvia was really broken-hearted, or believed she was, and implored that she might attend the deposed sovereigns into exile ; but that was impossible, however anxious they might be as to the future of their favourite. Her destiny was sooner decided than they could have anticipated. There was a member of the household, or rather family, in Hill Street who bore almost the same relation to Mr. Ferrars as Sylvia to his wife. This was Mr. Rodney, a remarkably good-looking person, by nature really a little resembling his principal, and completing the

resemblance by consummate art. The courtiers of Alexander of Macedon could not study their chief with more devotion, or more sedulously imitate his mien and carriage, than did Mr. Rodney that distinguished individual of whom he was the humble friend, and who he was convinced was destined to be Prime Minister of England. Mr. Rodney was the son of the office-keeper of old Mr. Ferrars, and it was the ambition of the father that his son, for whom he had secured a sound education, should become a member of the civil service. It had become an apothegm in the Ferrars family that something must be done for Rodney, and whenever the apparent occasion failed, which was not unfrequent, old Mr. Ferrars used always to add, 'Never mind; so long as I live, Rodney shall never want a home.' The object of all this kindness, however, was little distressed by their failures in his preferment. He had implicit faith in the career of his friend and master, and looked forward to the time when it might not be impossible that he himself might find a haven in a commissionership. Recently

Mr. Ferrars had been able to confer on him a small post with duties not too engrossing, and which did not prevent his regular presence in Hill Street, where he made himself generally useful.

If there were anything confidential to be accomplished in their domestic life, everything might be trusted to his discretion and entire devotion. He supervised the establishment without injudiciously interfering with the house-steward, copied secret papers for Mr. Ferrars, and when that gentleman was out of office acted as his private secretary. Mr. Rodney was the most official personage in the ministerial circle. He considered human nature only with reference to office. No one was so intimately acquainted with all the details of the lesser patronage as himself, and his hours of study were passed in the pages of the 'Peerage' and in penetrating the mysteries of the 'Royal Calendar.'

The events of 1832, therefore, to this gentleman were scarcely a less severe blow than to the Ferrars family itself. Indeed, like his chief, he looked upon himself as the victim of

a revolution. Mr. Rodney had always been an admirer of Sylvia, but no more. He had accompanied her to the theatre, and had attended her to the park, but this was quite understood on both sides only to be gallantry; both, perhaps, in their prosperity, with respect to the serious step of life, had indulged in higher dreams. But the sympathy of sorrow is stronger than the sympathy of prosperity. In the darkness of their lives, each required comfort: he murmured some accents of tender solace, and Sylvia agreed to become Mrs. Rodney.

When they considered their position the prospect was not free from anxiety. To marry and then separate is, where there is affection, trying. His income would secure them little more than a roof, but how to live under that roof was a mystery. For her to become a governess, and for him to become a secretary, and to meet only on an occasional Sunday, was a sorry lot. And yet both possessed accomplishments or acquirements which ought in some degree to be productive. Rod-

ney had a friend, and he determined to consult him.

That friend was no common person; he was Mr. Vigo, by birth a Yorkshireman, and gifted with all the attributes, physical and intellectual, of that celebrated race. At present he was the most fashionable tailor in London, and one whom many persons consulted. Besides being consummate in his art, Mr. Vigo had the reputation of being a man of singularly good judgment. He was one who obtained influence over all with whom he came in contact, and as his business placed him in contact with various classes, but especially with the class socially most distinguished, his influence was great. The golden youth who repaired to his counters came there not merely to obtain raiment of the best material and the most perfect cut, but to see and talk with Mr. Vigo, and to ask his opinion on various points. There was a spacious room where, if they liked, they might smoke a cigar, and 'Vigo's cigars' were something which no one could rival. If they liked to take a glass of hock with their tobacco, there was a bottle ready

from the cellars of Johannisberg. Mr. Vigo's stable was almost as famous as its master; he drove the finest horses in London, and rode the best hunters in the Vale of Aylesbury. With all this, his manners were exactly what they should be. He was neither pretentious nor servile, but simple, and with becoming respect for others and for himself. He never took a liberty with anyone, and such treatment, as is generally the case, was reciprocal.

Mr. Vigo was much attached to Mr. Rodney, and was proud of his intimate acquaintance with him. He wanted a friend not of his own order, for that would not increase or improve his ideas, but one conversant with the habits and feelings of a superior class, and yet he did not want a fine gentleman for an intimate, who would have been either an insolent patron or a designing parasite. Rodney had relations with the aristocracy, with the political world, and could feel the pulse of public life. His appearance was engaging, his manners gentle if not gentlemanlike, and he had a temper never disturbed. This is a quality highly appre-

ciated by men of energy and fire, who may happen not to have a complete self-control.

When Rodney detailed to his friend the catastrophe that had occurred and all its sad consequences, Mr. Vigo heard him in silence, occasionally nodding his head in sympathy or approbation, or scrutinising a statement with his keen hazel eye. When his visitor had finished, he said—

'When there has been a crash, there is nothing like a change of scene. I propose that you and Mrs. Rodney should come and stay with me a week at my house at Barnes, and there a good many things may occur to us.'

And so, towards the end of the week, when the Rodneys had exhausted their whole programme of projects, against every one of which there seemed some invincible objection, their host said, 'You know I rather speculate in houses. I bought one last year in Warwick Street. It is a large roomy house in a quiet situation, though in a bustling quarter, just where members of parliament would like to lodge. I have put it in thorough repair. What

I propose is that you should live there, let the first and second floors—they are equally good —and live on the ground floor yourselves, which is amply convenient. We will not talk about rent till the year is over and we see how it answers. The house is unfurnished, but that is nothing. I will introduce you to a friend of mine who will furnish it for you solidly and handsomely, you paying a percentage on the amount expended. He will want a guarantee, but of course I will be that. It is an experiment, but try it. Try it for a year ; at any rate you will be a householder, and you will have the opportunity of thinking of something else.'

Hitherto the Rodneys had been successful in their enterprise, and the soundness of Mr. Vigo's advice had been proved. Their house was full, and of the best tenants. Their first floor was taken by a distinguished M.P., a county member of repute whom Mr. Rodney had known before the 'revolution,' and who was so pleased with his quarters, and the comfort and refinement of all about him, that to ensure their constant enjoyment he became a

yearly tenant. Their second floor, which was nearly as good as their first, was inhabited by a young gentleman of fashion, who took them originally only by the week, and who was always going to give them up, but never did The weekly lodger went to Paris, and he went to German baths, and he went to country houses, and he was frequently a long time away, but he never gave up his lodgings. When therefore Mr. Ferrars called in Warwick Street, the truth is the house was full and there was no vacant room for him. But this the Rodneys would not admit. Though they were worldly people, and it seemed impossible that anything more could be gained from the ruined house of Hurstley, they had, like many other people, a superstition, and their superstition was an adoration of the family of Ferrars. The sight of their former master, who, had it not been for the revolution, might have been Prime Minister of England, and the recollection of their former mistress and all her splendour, and all the rich dresses which she used to give so profusely to her dependent, quite overwhelmed them. With-

out consultation this sympathising couple leapt to the same conclusion. They assured Mr. Ferrars they could accommodate him, and that he should find everything prepared for him when he called again, and they resigned to him, without acknowledging it, their own commodious and well-furnished chamber, which Mrs. Rodney prepared for him with the utmost solicitude, arranging his writing-table and materials as he used to have them in Hill Street, and showing by a variety of modes she remembered all his ways.

CHAPTER XVII.

After securing his room in Warwick Street, Mr. Ferrars called on his political chiefs. Though engrossed with affairs, the moment his card was exhibited he was seen, cordially welcomed, and addressed in confidence. Not only were his claims acknowledged without being preferred, but an evidently earnest hope was expressed that they might be fully satisfied. No one had suffered more for the party and no one had worked harder or more effectively for it. But at present nothing could be done and nothing more could be said. All depended on Peel. Until he arrived nothing could be arranged. Their duties were limited to provisionally administering the affairs of the country until his appearance.

It was many days, even weeks, before that event could happen. The messenger would

travel to Rome night and day, but it was calculated that nearly three weeks must elapse before his return. Mr. Ferrars then went to the Carlton Club, which he had assisted in forming three or four years before, and had established in a house of moderate dimensions in Charles Street, St. James. It was called then the Charles Street gang, and none but the thorough-going cared to belong to it. Now he found it flourishing in a magnificent mansion on Carlton Terrace, while in very sight of its windows, on a plot of ground in Pall Mall, a palace was rising to receive it. It counted already fifteen hundred members, who had been selected by an omniscient and scrutinising committee, solely with reference to their local influence throughout the country, and the books were overflowing with impatient candidates of rank, and wealth, and power.

Three years ago Ferrars had been one of the leading spirits of this great confederacy, and now he entered the superb chamber, and it seemed to him that he did not recognise a human being. Yet it was full to overflowing, and excitement, and anxiety, and bustle were

impressed on every countenance. If he had heard some of the whispers and remarks, as he entered and moved about, his self-complacency would scarcely have been gratified.

'Who is that?' inquired a young M.P of a brother senator not much more experienced.

'Have not the remotest idea; never saw him before. Barron is speaking to him; he will tell us. I say, Barron, who is your friend?'

'That is Ferrars!'

'Ferrars! who is he?'

'One of our best men. If all our fellows had fought like him against the Reform Bill, that infernal measure would never have been carried.'

'Oh! ah! I remember something now,' said the young M.P., 'but anything that happened before the election of '32 I look upon as an old almanack.'

However, notwithstanding the first and painful impression of strangers and strangeness, when a little time had elapsed, Ferrars found many friends, and among the most dis-

tinguished present. Nothing could be more hearty than their greeting, and he had not been in the room half an hour before he had accepted an invitation to dine that very day with Lord Pomeroy.

It was a large and rather miscellaneous party, but all of the right kidney. Some men who had been cabinet ministers, and some who expected to be; several occupiers in old days of the secondary offices; both the whips, one noisy and the other mysterious; several lawyers of repute who must be brought into parliament, and some young men who had distinguished themselves in the reformed house and whom Ferrars had never seen before. 'It is like old days,' said the husband of Zenobia to Ferrars, who sate next to him; 'I hope it will float, but we shall know nothing till Peel comes.'

'He will have difficulty with his cabinet, so far as the House of Commons is concerned,' said an old privy councillor. 'They must have seats, and his choice is very limited.'

'He will dissolve,' said the husband of Zenobia. 'He must.'

'Wheugh!' said the privy councillor, and he shrugged his shoulders.

'The old story will not do,' said the husband of Zenobia. 'We must have new blood. Peel must reconstruct on a broad basis.'

'Well, they say there is no lack of converts,' said the old privy councillor.

All this, and much more that he heard, made Ferrars ponder, and anxiously. No cabinet without parliament. It was but reasonable. A dissolution was therefore in his interest. And yet, what a prospect! A considerable expenditure, and yet with a considerable expenditure a doubtful result. Then reconstruction on a broad basis—what did that mean? Neither more nor less than rival candidates for office. There was no lack of converts. He dare say not. A great deal had developed since his exile at Hurstley—things which are not learned by newspapers, or even private correspondence. He spoke to Barron after dinner. He had reason to believe Barron was his friend. Barron could give no opinion about dissolution; all depended on

Peel. But they were acting, and had been acting for some time, as if a dissolution were on the cards. Ferrars had better call upon him to-morrow, and go over the list, and see what could be done for him. He had every claim.

The man with every claim called on Barron on the morrow, and saw his secret list, and listened to all his secret prospects and secret plans. There was more than one manufacturing town where there was an opening; decided reaction, and a genuine Conservative feeling. Barron had no doubt, that although a man might not get in the first time he stood, he would ultimately. Ultimately was not a word which suited Mr. Ferrars. There were several old boroughs where the freemen still outnumbered the ten-pounders, and where the prospects were more than encouraging; but the expense was equal to the goodness of the chance, and although Ferrars had every claim, and would no doubt be assisted, still one could not shut one's eyes to the fact that the personal expenditure must be considerable. The agricultural boroughs

must be fought, at least this time, by local men. Something might be done with an Irish borough; expense, comparatively speaking, inconsiderable, but the politics deeply Orange.

Gloom settled on the countenance of this spoiled child of politics, who had always sate for a close borough, and who recoiled from a contest like a woman, when he pictured to himself the struggle and exertion and personal suffering he would have to encounter and endure, and then with no certainty of success. The trained statesman, who had anticipated the mass of his party on Catholic emancipation, to become an Orange candidate! It was worse than making speeches to ten-pounders and canvassing freemen!

'I knew things were difficult,' said Ferrars; 'but I was in hopes that there were yet some seats that we might command.'

'No doubt there are,' said Mr. Barron; 'but they are few, and they are occupied—at least at present. But, after all, a thousand things may turn up, and you may consider nothing definitively arranged till Sir Robert arrives. The great thing is to be on the spot.'

Ferrars wrote to his wife daily, and kept her minutely acquainted with the course of affairs. She agreed with Barron that the great thing was to be on the spot. She felt sure that something would turn up. She was convinced that Sir Robert would send for him, offer him Cabinet, and at the same time provide him with a seat. Her own inclination was still in favour of a great colonial or foreign appointment She still hankered after India; but if the cabinet were offered, as was certain, she did not consider that William, as a man of honour, could refuse to accept the trust and share the peril.

So Ferrars remained in London under the roof of the Rodneys. The feverish days passed in the excitement of political life in all its manifold forms, grave council and light gossip, dinners with only one subject of conversation, and that never palling, and at last, even evenings spent again under the roof of Zenobia, who, the instant her winter apartments were ready to receive the world, had hurried up to London and raised her standard in St. James' Square. 'It was like old days,'

as her husband had said to Ferrars when they met after a long separation.

Was it like old days? he thought to himself when he was alone. Old days, when the present had no care, and the future was all hope; when he was proud, and justly proud, of the public position he had achieved, and of all the splendid and felicitous circumstances of life that had clustered round him. He thought of those away, and with whom during the last three years he had so continuously and intimately lived. And his hired home that once had been associated only in his mind with exile, imprisonment, misfortune, almost disgrace, became hallowed by affections, and in the agony of the suspense, which now involved him, and to encounter which he began to think his diminished nerve unequal, he would have bargained for the rest of his life to pass undisturbed in that sweet solitude, in the delights of study and the tranquillity of domestic love.

A little not unamiable weakness this, but it passed off in the morning like a dream, when Mr. Ferrars heard that Sir Robert had arrived.

CHAPTER XVIII.

It was a dark December night when Mr. Ferrars returned to Hurstley. His wife, accompanied by the gardener with a lantern, met him on the green. She embraced him, and whispered, 'Is it very bad, love? I fear you have softened it to me?'

'By no means bad, and I told you the truth; not all, for had I, my letter would have been too late. He said nothing about the cabinet, but offered me a high post in his government, provided I could secure my seat. That was impossible. During the month I was in town I had realised that. I thought it best, therefore, at once to try the other tack, and nothing could be more satisfactory.'

'Did you say anything about India?' she said in a very low voice.

'I did not. He is an honourable man, but he is cold, and my manner is not distinguished for *abandon*. I thought it best to speak generally, and leave it to him. He acknowledged my claim, and my fitness for such posts, and said if his government lasted it would gratify him to meet my wishes. Barron says the government will last. They will have a majority, and if Stanley and Graham had joined them, they would have had not an inconsiderable one. But in that case I should probably not have had the cabinet, if indeed he meant to offer it to me now.'

'Of course he did,' said his wife. 'Who has such claims as you have? Well, now we must hope, and watch. Look cheerful to the children, for they have been very anxious.'

With this hint the meeting was not unhappy, and the evening passed with amusement and interest. Endymion embraced his father with warmth, and Myra kissed him on both cheeks. Mr. Ferrars had a great deal of gossip which interested his wife, and to a certain degree his children. The latter of course remembered

Zenobia, and her sayings and doings were always amusing. There were anecdotes too of illustrious persons which always interest, especially when in the personal experience of those with whom we are intimately connected. What the Duke, or Sir Robert, or Lord Lyndhurst, said to papa seemed doubly wiser or brighter than if it had been said to a third person. Their relations with the world of power, and fashion, and fame, seemed not to be extinct, at least reviving from their torpid condition. Mr. Ferrars had also brought a German book for Myra; and 'as for you, Endymion,' he said, 'I have been much more successful for you than for your father, though I hope I shall not have myself in the long run to complain. Our friends are faithful to us, and I have got you put down on the private list for a clerkship both in the Foreign Office and the Treasury. They are the two best things, and you will have one of the first vacancies that will occur in either department. I know your mother wishes you to be in the Foreign Office. Let it be so if it come. I confess, myself, remembering your grand-

father's career, I have always a weakness for the Treasury, but so long as I see you well planted in Whitehall, I shall be content. Let me see, you will be sixteen in March. I could have wished you to wait another year, but we must be ready when the opening occurs.'

The general election in 1834–5, though it restored the balance of parties, did not secure Sir Robert Peel a majority, and the anxiety of the family at Hurstley was proportionate to the occasion. Barron was always sanguine, but the vote on the speakership could not but alarm them. Barron said it did not signify, and that Sir Robert had resolved to go on and had confidence in his measures. His measures were excellent, and Sir Robert never displayed more resource, more energy, and more skill, than he did in the spring of 1835. But knowledge of human nature was not Sir Robert Peel's strong point, and it argued some deficiency in that respect, to suppose that the fitness of his measures could disarm a vindictive opposition. On the contrary they rather whetted their desire of revenge, and

they were doubly loth that he should increase his reputation by availing himself of an opportunity which they deemed the Tory party had unfairly acquired.

After the vote on the speakership, Mr. Ferrars was offered a second-class West Indian government. His wife would not listen to it. If it were Jamaica, the offer might be considered, though it could scarcely be accepted without great sacrifice. The children, for instance, must be left at home. Strange to say, Mr. Ferrars was not disinclined to accept the inferior post. Endymion he looked upon as virtually provided for, and Myra, he thought, might accompany them; if only for a year. But he ultimately yielded, though not without a struggle, to the strong feeling of his wife.

'I do not see why I also should not be left behind,' said Myra to her brother in one of their confidential walks. 'I should like to live in London in lodgings with you.'

The approaching appointment of her brother filled her from the first with the greatest interest. She was always talking of it when

they were alone—fancying his future life, and planning how it might be happier and more easy. 'My only joy in life is seeing you,' she sometimes said, 'and yet this separation does not make me unhappy. It seems a chance from heaven for you. I pray every night it may be the Foreign Office.'

The ministry were still sanguine as to their prospects in the month of March, and they deemed that public opinion was rallying round Sir Robert. Perhaps Lord John Russell, who was the leader of the opposition, felt this, in some degree, himself, and he determined to bring affairs to a crisis by notice of a motion respecting the appropriation of the revenues of the Irish Church. Then Barron wrote to Mr. Ferrars that affairs did not look so well, and advised him to come up to town, and take anything that offered. 'It is something,' he remarked, 'to have something to give up. We shall not, I suppose, always be out of office, and they get preferred more easily whose promotion contributes to patronage, even while they claim its exercise.'

The ministry were in a minority on the

Irish Church on April 2, the day on which Mr. Ferrars arrived in town. They did not resign, but the attack was to be repeated in another form on the 6th. During the terrible interval Mr. Ferrars made distracted visits to Downing Street, saw secretaries of state, who sympathised with him notwithstanding their own chagrin, and was closeted daily and hourly with under-secretaries, parliamentary and permanent, who really alike wished to serve him. But there was nothing to be had. He was almost meditating taking Sierra Leone, or the Gold Coast, when the resignation of Sir Robert Peel was announced. At the last moment, there being, of course, no vacancy in the Foreign Office or the Treasury, he obtained from Barron an appointment for Endymion, and so, after having left Hurstley five months before to become Governor-General of India, this man, 'who had claims,' returned to his mortified home with a clerkship for his son in a second-rate government office.

CHAPTER XIX.

DISAPPOINTMENT and distress, it might be said despair, seemed fast settling again over the devoted roof of Hurstley, after a three years' truce of tranquillity. Even the crushing termination of her worldly hopes was forgotten for the moment by Mrs. Ferrars in her anguish at the prospect of separation from Endymion. Such a catastrophe she had never for a moment contemplated. True it was she had been delighted with the scheme of his entering the Foreign Office, but that was on the assumption that she was to enter office herself, and that, whatever might be the scene of the daily labours of her darling child, her roof should be his home, and her indulgent care always at his command. But that she was absolutely to part with Endymion, and that, at his tender age, he was to be launched alone into the wide

world, was an idea that she could not entertain, or even comprehend. Who was to clothe him, and feed him, and tend him, and save him from being run over, and guide and guard him in all the difficulties and dangers of this mundane existence? It was madness, it was impossible. But Mr. Ferrars, though gentle, was firm. No doubt it was to be wished that the event could have been postponed for a year; but its occurrence, unless all prospect of establishment in life were surrendered, was inevitable, and a slight delay would hardly render the conditions under which it happened less trying. Though Endymion was only sixteen, he was tall and manly beyond his age, and during the latter years of his life, his naturally sweet temper and genial disposition had been schooled in self-discipline and self-sacrifice. He was not to be wholly left to strangers; Mr. Ferrars had spoken to Rodney about receiving him, at least for the present, and steps would be taken that those who presided over his office would be influenced in his favour. The appointment was certainly not equal to what had been originally anticipated; but still

the department, though not distinguished, was highly respectable, and there was no reason on earth, if the opportunity offered, that Endymion should not be removed from his present post to one in the higher departments of the state. But if this opening were rejected, what was to be the future of their son? They could not afford to send him to the University, nor did Mr. Ferrars wish him to take refuge in the bosom of the Church. As for the army, they had now no interest to acquire commissions, and if they could succeed so far, they could not make him an allowance, which would permit him to maintain himself as became his rank. The civil service remained, in which his grandfather had been eminent, and in which his own parent, at any rate, though the victim of a revolution, had not disgraced himself. It seemed, under the circumstances, the natural avenue for their child. At least, he thought it ought to be tried. He wished nothing to be settled without the full concurrence of Endymion himself. The matter should be put fairly and clearly before him, 'and for this purpose,' concluded Mr. Ferrars,

'I have just sent for him to my room;' and he retired.

The interview between the father and son was long. When Endymion left the room his countenance was pale, but its expression was firm and determined. He went forth into the garden, and there he saw Myra. 'How long you have been!' she said; 'I have been watching for you. What is settled?'

He took her arm, and in silence led her away into one of the glades. Then he said: 'I have settled to go, and I am resolved, so long as I live, that I will never cost dear papa another shilling. Things here are very bad, quite as bad as you have sometimes fancied. But do not say anything to poor mamma about them.'

Mr. Ferrars resolved that Endymion should go to London immediately, and the preparations for his departure were urgent. Myra did everything. If she had been the head of a family she could not have been more thoughtful or apparently more experienced. If she had a doubt, she stepped over to Mrs. Penruddock and consulted her. As for Mrs. Ferrars,

she had become very unwell and unable to attend to anything. Her occasional interference, fitful and feverish, and without adequate regard to circumstances, only embarrassed them. But, generally speaking, she kept to her own room, and was always weeping.

The last day came. No one pretended not to be serious and grave. Mrs. Ferrars did not appear, but saw Endymion alone. She did not speak, but locked him in her arms for many minutes, and then kissing him on the forehead, and, by a gentle motion, intimating that he should retire, she fell back on her sofa with closed eyes. He was alone for a short time with his father after dinner. Mr. Ferrars said to him: 'I have treated you in this matter as a man, and I have entire confidence in you. Your business in life is to build up again a family which was once honoured.'

Myra was still copying inventories when he returned to the drawing-room. 'These are for myself,' she said, 'so I shall always know what you ought to have. Though you go so early, I shall make your breakfast to-morrow,' and, leaning back on the sofa, she took his

hand. 'Things are dark, and I fancy they will be darker; but brightness will come, somehow or other, to you, darling, for you are born for brightness. You will find friends in life, and they will be women.'

It was nearly three years since Endymion had travelled down to Hurstley by the same coach that was now carrying him to London. Though apparently so uneventful, the period had not been unimportant in the formation, doubtless yet partial, of his character. And all its influences had been beneficial to him. The crust of pride and selfishness with which large prosperity and illimitable indulgence had encased a kind, and far from presumptuous, disposition had been removed; the domestic sentiments in their sweetness and purity had been developed; he had acquired some skill in scholarship and no inconsiderable fund of sound information; and the routine of religious thought had been superseded in his instance by an amount of knowledge and feeling on matters theological, unusual at his time of life. Though apparently not gifted with any dangerous vivacity, or fatal facility of ac-

quisition, his mind seemed clear and painstaking, and distinguished by common sense. He was brave and accurate.

Mr. Rodney was in waiting for him at the inn. He seemed a most distinguished gentleman. A hackney-coach carried them to Warwick Street, where he was welcomed by Mrs. Rodney, who was exquisitely dressed. There was also her sister, a girl not older than Endymion, the very image of Mrs. Rodney, except that she was a brunette—a brilliant brunette. This sister bore the romantic name of Imogene, for which she was indebted to her father performing the part of the husband of the heroine in Maturin's tragedy of the 'Castle of St. Aldobrand,' and which, under the inspiration of Kean, had set the town in a blaze about the time of her birth. Tea was awaiting him, and there was a mixture in their several manners of not ungraceful hospitality and the remembrance of past dependence, which was genuine and not uninteresting, though Endymion was yet too inexperienced to observe all this.

Mrs. Rodney talked very much of Endy-

mion's mother; her wondrous beauty, her more wondrous dresses; the splendour of her fêtes and equipages. As she dilated on the past, she seemed to share its lustre and its triumphs. 'The first of the land were always in attendance on her,' and for Mrs. Rodney's part, she never saw a real horsewoman since her dear lady. Her sister did not speak, but listened with rapt attention to the gorgeous details, occasionally stealing a glance at Endymion—a glance of deep interest, of admiration mingled as it were both with reverence and pity.

Mr. Rodney took up the conversation if his wife paused. He spoke of all the leading statesmen who had been the habitual companions of Mr. Ferrars, and threw out several anecdotes respecting them from personal experience. 'I knew them all,' continued Mr. Rodney, 'I might say intimately;' and then he told his great anecdote, how he had been so fortunate as perhaps even to save the Duke's life during the Reform Bill riots. 'His Grace has never forgotten it, and only the day before yesterday I met him in St. James' Street

walking with Mr. Arbuthnot, and he touched his hat to me.'

All this gossip and good nature, and the kind and lively scene, saved Endymion from the inevitable pang, or at least greatly softened it, which accompanies our first separation from home. In due season, Mrs. Rodney observed that she doubted not Mr. Endymion, for so they ever called him, must be wearied with his journey, and would like to retire to his room; and her husband, immediately lighting a candle, prepared to introduce their new lodger to his quarters.

It was a tall house, which had recently been renovated, with a story added to it, and on this story was Endymion's chamber; not absolutely a garret, but a modern substitute for that sort of apartment. 'It is rather high,' said Mr. Rodney, half apologising for the ascent, 'but Mr. Ferrars himself chose the room. We took the liberty of lighting a fire to-night.'

And the cheerful blaze was welcome. It lit up a room clean and not uncomfortable. Feminine solicitude had fashioned a toilette-

table for him, and there was a bunch of geraniums in a blue vase on its sparkling dimity garniture. 'I suppose you have in your bag all that you want at present?' said Mr. Rodney. 'To-morrow we will unpack your trunks and arrange your things in their drawers; and after breakfast, if you please, I will show you your way to Somerset House.'

Somerset House! thought Endymion, as he stood before the fire alone. Is it so near as that? To-morrow, and I am to be at Somerset House! And then he thought of what they were doing at Hurstley—of that terrible parting with his mother, which made him choke—and of his father's last words. And then he thought of Myra, and the tears stole down his cheek. And then he knelt down by his bed-side and prayed.

CHAPTER XX.

Mr. Rodney would have accompanied Endymion to Somerset House under any circumstances, but it so happened that he had reasons of his own for a visit to that celebrated building. He had occasion to see a gentleman who was stationed there. 'Not,' as he added to Endymion, 'that I know many here, but at the Treasury and in Downing Street I have several acquaintances.'

They separated at the door in the great quadrangle which led to the department to which Endymion was attached, and he contrived in due time to deliver to a messenger a letter addressed to his future chief. He was kept some time in a gloomy and almost unfurnished waiting-room, and his thoughts in a desponding mood were gathering round the dear ones who were distant, when he was

summoned, and, following the messenger down a passage, was ushered into a lively apartment on which the sun was shining, and which, with its well-lined book-shelves, and tables covered with papers, and bright noisy clock, and general air of habitation and business, contrasted favourably with the room he had just quitted. A goodnatured-looking man held out his hand and welcomed him cordially, and said at once, 'I served, Mr. Ferrars, under your grandfather at the Treasury, and I am glad to see you here.' Then he spoke of the duties which Endymion would have at present to discharge. His labours at first would be somewhat mechanical; they would require only correctness and diligence; but the office was a large one, and promotion not only sure, but sometimes rapid, and as he was so young, he might with attention count on attaining, while yet in the prime of life, a future of very responsible duties and of no inconsiderable emolument. And while he was speaking he rang the bell and commanded the attendance of a clerk, under whose care Endymion was specially placed. This was a young man of

pleasant address, who invited Endymion with kindness to accompany him, and leading him through several chambers, some capacious, and all full of clerks seated on high stools and writing at desks, finally ushered him into a smaller chamber where there were not above six or eight at work, and where there was a vacant seat. 'This is your place,' he said, 'and now I will introduce you to your future comrades. This is Mr. Jawett, the greatest Radical of the age, and who, when he is President of the Republic, will, I hope, do a job for his friends here. This is Mr. St. Barbe, who, when the public taste has improved, will be the most popular author of the day. In the meantime he will give you a copy of his novel, which has not sold as it ought to have done, and in which we say he has quizzed all his friends. This is Mr. Seymour Hicks, who, as you must perceive, is a man of fashion.' And so he went on, with what was evidently accustomed raillery. All laughed, and all said something courteous to Endymion, and then after a few minutes they resumed their tasks, Endymion's work being to copy long lists of

figures, and routine documents of public accounts.

In the meantime Mr. St. Barbe was busy in drawing up a public document of a different but important character, and which was conceived something in this fashion :—

'We, the undersigned, highly approving of the personal appearance and manners of our new colleague, are unanimously of opinion that he should be invited to join our symposium to-day at the immortal Joe's.'

This was quietly passed round and signed by all present, and then given to Mr. Trenchard, who, all unconsciously to the copying Endymion, wrote upon it, like a minister of state, 'Approved,' with his initial.

Joe's, more technically known as 'The Blue Posts,' was a celebrated chop-house in Naseby Street, a large, low-ceilinged, wainscoted room, with the floor strewn with sawdust, and a hissing kitchen in the centre, and fitted up with what were called boxes, these being of various sizes, and suitable to the number of the guests requiring them. About this time the fashionable coffee-houses, George's and the

Piazza, and even the coffee-rooms of Stevens' or Long's, had begun to feel the injurious competitions of the new clubs that of late years had been established ; but these, after all, were limited, and, comparatively speaking, exclusive societies. Their influence had not touched the chop-houses, and it required another quarter of a century before their cheerful and hospitable roofs and the old taverns of London, so full, it ever seemed, of merriment and wisdom, yielded to the gradually increasing but irresistible influence of those innumerable associations, which, under classic names, or affecting to be the junior branches of celebrated confederacies, have since secured to the million, at cost price, all the delicacies of the season, and substituted for the zealous energy of immortal JOES the inexorable but frigid discipline of managing committees.

'You are our guest to-day,' said Mr. Trenchard to Endymion. 'Do not be embarrassed. It is a custom with us, but not a ruinous one. We dine off the joint, but the meat is first-rate, and you may have as much as you like, and our tipple is half-and-half.

Perhaps you do not know it. Let me drink to your health.'

They ate most heartily; but when their well-earned meal was despatched, their conversation, assisted by a moderate portion of some celebrated toddy, became animated, various, and interesting. Endymion was highly amused; but being a stranger, and the youngest present, his silence was not unbecoming, and his manner indicated that it was not occasioned by want of sympathy. The talk was very political. They were all what are called Liberals, having all of them received their appointments since the catastrophe of 1830; but the shades in the colour of their opinions were various and strong. Jawett was uncompromising; ruthlessly logical, his principles being clear, he was for what he called 'carrying them out' to their just conclusions. Trenchard, on the contrary, thought everything ought to be compromise, and that a public man ceased to be practical the moment he was logical. St. Barbe believed that literature and the arts, and intellect generally, had as little to hope for from one party as

from the other; while Seymour Hicks was of opinion that the Tories never would rally, owing to their deficiency in social influences. Seymour Hicks sometimes got an invitation to a ministerial soirée.

The vote of the House of Commons in favour of an appropriation of the surplus revenues of the Irish Church to the purposes of secular education—a vote which had just changed the government and expelled the Tories—was much discussed. Jawett denounced it as a miserable subterfuge, but with a mildness of manner and a mincing expression, which amusingly contrasted with the violence of his principles and the strength of his language.

'The whole of the revenues of the Protestant Church should be at once appropriated to secular education, or to some other purpose of general utility,' he said. 'And it must come to this.'

Trenchard thought the ministry had gone as far in this matter as they well could, and Seymour Hicks remarked that any government which systematically attacked the

Church would have 'society' against it. Endymion, who felt very nervous, but who on Church questions had strong convictions, ventured to ask why the Church should be deprived of its property.

'In the case of Ireland,' replied Jawett, quite in a tone of conciliatory condescension, 'because it does not fulfil the purpose for which it was endowed. It has got the property of the nation, and it is not the Church of the people. But I go further than that. I would disendow every Church. They are not productive institutions. There is no reason why they should exist. There is no use in them.'

'No use in the Church!' said Endymion, reddening; but Mr. Trenchard, who had tact, here interfered, and said, 'I told you our friend Jawett was a great Radical; but he is in a minority among us on these matters. Everybody, however, says what he likes at Joe's.'

Then they talked of theatres, and critically discussed the articles in the daily papers and the last new book, and there was much dis-

cussion respecting a contemplated subscription boat; but still, in general, it was remarkable how they relapsed into their favourite subject —speculation upon men in office, both permanent and parliamentary, upon their characters and capacity, their habits and tempers. One was a good administrator, another did nothing; one had no detail, another too much; one was a screw, another a spendthrift; this man could make a set speech, but could not reply; his rival, capital at a reply but clumsy in a formal oration.

At this time London was a very dull city, instead of being, as it is now, a very amusing one. Probably there never was a city in the world, with so vast a population, which was so melancholy. The aristocracy probably have always found amusements adapted to the manners of the time and the age in which they lived. The middle classes, half a century ago, had little distraction from their monotonous toil and melancholy anxieties, except, perhaps, what they found in religious and philanthropic societies. Their general life must have been very dull. Some tradi-

tionary merriment always lingered among the working classes of England. Both in town and country they had always their games and fairs and junketing parties, which have developed into excursion trains and colossal pic-nics. But of all classes of the community, in the days of our fathers, there was none so unfortunate in respect of public amusements as the bachelors about town. There were, one might almost say, only two theatres, and they so huge, that it was difficult to see or hear in either. Their monopolies, no longer redeemed by the stately genius of the Kembles, the pathos of Miss O'Neill, or the fiery passion of Kean, were already menaced, and were soon about to fall; but the crowd of diminutive but sparkling substitutes, which have since taken their place, had not yet appeared, and half-price at Drury Lane or Covent Garden was a dreary distraction after a morning of desk work. There were no Alhambras then, and no Cremornes, no palaces of crystal in terraced gardens, no casinos, no music-halls, no aquaria, no promenade concerts. Evans' existed, but not in

the fulness of its modern development; and the most popular place of resort was the barbarous conviviality of the Cider Cellar.

Mr. Trenchard had paid the bill, collected his quotas and rewarded the waiter, and then, as they all rose, said to Endymion, 'We are going to the divan. Do you smoke?'

Endymion shook his head; but Trenchard added, 'Well, you will some day; but you had better come with us. You need not smoke: you can order a cup of coffee, and then you may read all the newspapers and magazines. It is a nice lounge.'

So, emerging from Naseby Street into the Strand, they soon entered a tobacconist's shop, and passing through it were admitted into a capacious saloon, well lit and fitted up with low, broad sofas, fixed against the walls, and on which were seated, or reclining, many persons, chiefly smoking cigars, but some few practising with the hookah and other oriental modes. In the centre of the room was a table covered with newspapers and publications of that class. The companions from Joe's became separated after their entrance, and St.

Barbe, addressing Endymion, said, 'I am not inclined to smoke to-day. We will order some coffee, and you will find some amusement in this;' and he placed in his hands a number of 'SCARAMOUCH.'

'I hope you will like your new life,' said St. Barbe, throwing down a review on the divan, and leaning back sipping his coffee. 'One thing may be said in favour of it: you will work with a body of as true-hearted comrades as ever existed. They are always ready to assist one. Thorough good-natured fellows, that I will say for them. I suppose it is adversity,' he continued, 'that develops the kindly qualities of our nature. I believe the sense of common degradation has a tendency to make the degraded amiable—at least among themselves. I am told it is found so in the plantations in slave-gangs.'

'But I hope we are not a slave-gang,' said Endymion.

'It is horrible to think of gentlemen, and men of education, and perhaps first-rate talents—who knows?—reduced to our straits,' said St. Barbe. 'I do not follow Jawett in all

his views, for I hate political economy and never could understand it; and he gives it you pure and simple, eh? eh?—but I say it is something awful to think of the incomes that some men are making, who could no more write an article in "SCARAMOUCH" than fly.'

'But our incomes may improve,' said Endymion. 'I was told to-day that promotion was even rapid in our office.'

'Our incomes may improve when we are bent and grey,' said St. Barbe, 'and we may even retire on a pension about as good as a nobleman leaves to his valet. Oh, it is a horrid world! Your father is a privy councillor, is not he?'

'Yes, and so was my grandfather, but I do not think I shall ever be one.'

'It is a great thing to have a father a privy councillor,' said St. Barbe, with a glance of envy. 'If I were the son of a privy councillor, those demons, Shuffle and Screw, would give me 500*l.* for my novel, which now they put in their beastly magazine and print in small type, and do not pay me so much as a powdered flunkey has in St. James' Square.

I agree with Jawett: the whole thing is rotten.'

'Mr. Jawett seems to have very strange opinions,' said Endymion. 'I did not like to hear what he said at dinner about the Church, but Mr. Trenchard turned the conversation, and I thought it best to let it pass.'

'Trenchard is a sensible man, and a good fellow,' said St. Barbe; 'you like him?'

'I find him kind.'

'Do you know,' said St. Barbe, in a whisper, and with a distressed and almost vindictive expression of countenance, 'that man may come any day into four thousand a year. There is only one life between him and the present owner. I believe it is a good life,' he added, in a more cheerful voice, 'but still it might happen. Is it not horrible? Four thousand a year! Trenchard with four thousand a year, and we receiving little more than the pay of a butler!'

'Well, I wish, for his sake, he might have it,' said Endymion, 'though I might lose a kind friend.'

'Look at Seymour Hicks,' said St. Barbe;

'he has smoked his cigar, and he is going. He never remains. He is going to a party, I'll be bound. That fellow gets about in a most extraordinary manner. Is it not disgusting? I doubt whether he is asked much to dinner though, or I think we should have heard of it. Nevertheless, Trenchard said the other day, that Hicks had dined with Lord Cinque-Ports. I can hardly believe it; it would be too disgusting. No lord ever asked me to dinner. But the aristocracy of this country are doomed!'

'Mr. Hicks,' said Endymion, 'probably lays himself out for society.'

'I suppose you will,' said St. Barbe, with a scrutinising air. 'I should if I were the son of a privy councillor. Hicks is nothing; his father kept a stable-yard and his mother was an actress. We have had several dignitaries of the Church in my family and one admiral. And yet Hicks dines with Lord Cinque-Ports! It is positively revolting! But the things he does to get asked!—sings, rants, conjures, ventriloquises, mimics, stands on his head. His great performance is a par-

liamentary debate. We will make him do it for you. And yet with all this a dull dog—a very dull dog, sir. He wrote for "Scaramouch" some little time, but they can stand it no more. Between you and me, he has had notice to quit. That I know; and he will probably get the letter when he goes home from his party to-night. So much for success in society! I shall now say good-night to you.'

CHAPTER XXI.

It was only ten o'clock when Endymion returned to Warwick Street, and for the first time in his life used a pass-key, with which Mr. Rodney had furnished him in the morning, and re-entered his new home. He thought he had used it very quietly, and was lighting his candle and about to steal up to his lofty heights, when from the door of the parlour, which opened into the passage, emerged Miss Imogene, who took the candlestick from his hand and insisted on waiting upon him.

'I thought I heard something,' she said; 'you must let me light you up, for you can hardly yet know your way. I must see too if all is right; you may want something.'

So she tripped up lightly before him, showing, doubtless without premeditation, as

well-turned an ankle and as pretty a foot as could fall to a damsel's fortunate lot. 'My sister and Mr. Rodney have gone to the play,' she said, 'but they left strict injunctions with me to see that you were comfortable, and that you wanted for nothing that we could supply.'

'You are too kind,' said Endymion, as she lighted the candles on his dressing-table, 'and, to tell you the truth, these are luxuries I am not accustomed to, and to which I am not entitled.'

'And yet,' she said, with a glance of blended admiration and pity, 'they tell me time was when gold was not good enough for you, and I do not think it could be.'

'Such kindness as this,' said Endymion, 'is more precious than gold.'

'I hope you will find your things well arranged. All your clothes are in these two drawers; the coats in the bottom one, and your linen in those above. You will not perhaps be able to find your pocket-handkerchiefs at first. They are in this sachet; my sister made it herself. Mr. Rodney says you

are to be called at eight o'clock and breakfast at nine. I think everything is right. Good-night, Mr. Endymion.'

The Rodney household was rather a strange one. The first two floors, as we have mentioned, were let, and at expensive rates, for the apartments were capacious and capitally furnished, and the situation, if not distinguished, was extremely convenient—quiet from not being a thoroughfare, and in the heart of civilisation. They only kept a couple of servants, but their principal lodgers had their personal attendants. And yet after sunset the sisters appeared and presided at their tea-table, always exquisitely dressed; seldom alone, for Mr. Rodney had many friends, and lived in a capacious apartment, rather finely furnished with a round table covered with gaudy print-books, a mantel-piece crowded with vases of mock Dresden, and a cottage piano on which Imogene could accompany her more than pleasing voice.

Somehow or other, the process is difficult to trace, Endymion not unfrequently found himself at Mrs. Rodney's tea-table. On the

first occasion or so, he felt himself a little shy and embarrassed, but it soon became natural to him, and he would often escape from the symposia at Joe's, and, instead of the Divan, find in Warwick Street a more congenial scene. There were generally some young men there, who seemed delighted with the ladies, listened with enthusiasm to Imogene's singing, and were allowed to smoke. They were evidently gentlemen, and indeed Mr. Rodney casually mentioned to Endymion that one of the most frequent guests might some day even be a peer of the realm. Sometimes there was a rubber of whist, and, if wanted, Mrs. Rodney took a hand in it; Endymion sitting apart and conversing with her sister, who amused him by her lively observations, indicating even flashes of culture; but always addressed him without the slightest pretence and with the utmost naturalness. This was not the case with Mr. Rodney; pretence with him was ingrained, and he was at first somewhat embarrassed by the presence of Endymion, as he could hardly maintain before his late patron's son his favourite character of

the aristocratic victim of revolution. And yet this drawback was more than counterbalanced by the gratification of his vanity in finding a Ferrars his habitual guest. Such a luxury seemed a dangerous indulgence, but he could not resist it, and the moth was always flying round the candle. There was no danger, however, and that Mr. Rodney soon found out. Endymion was born with tact, and it came to him as much from goodness of heart as fineness of taste. Mr. Rodney, therefore, soon resumed his anecdotes of great men and his personal experience of their sayings, manners, and customs, with which he was in the habit of enlivening or ornamenting the whist table; occasionally introducing Endymion to the notice of the table by mentioning in a low tone, 'That is Mr. Ferrars, in a certain sense under my care; his father is a privy councillor, and had it not been for the revolution—for I maintain, and always will, the Reform Bill was neither more nor less than a revolution—would probably have been Prime Minister. He was my earliest and my best friend.'

When there were cards, there was always a little supper: a lobster and a roasted potato and that sort of easy thing, and curious drinks, which the sisters mixed and made, and which no one else, at least all said so, could mix and make. On fitting occasions a bottle of champagne appeared, and then the person for whom the wine was produced was sure with wonderment to say, 'Where did you get this champagne, Rodney? Could you get me some?' Mr. Rodney shook his head and scarcely gave a hope, but subsequently, when the praise in consequence had continued and increased, would observe, 'Do you really want some? I cannot promise, but I will try. Of course they will ask a high figure.'

'Anything they like, my dear Rodney.'

And in about a week's time the gentleman was so fortunate as to get his champagne.

There was one subject in which Mr. Rodney appeared to be particularly interested, and that was racing. The turf at that time had not developed into that vast institution of national demoralisation which it now exhibits. That disastrous character may be mainly attri-

buted to the determination of our legislators to put down gaming-houses, which, practically speaking, substituted for the pernicious folly of a comparatively limited class the ruinous madness of the community. There were many influences by which in the highest classes persons might be discouraged or deterred from play under a roof; and in the great majority of cases such a habit was difficult, not to say impossible, to indulge. But in shutting up gaming-houses, we brought the gaming-table into the street, and its practices became the pursuit of those who would otherwise have never witnessed or even thought of them. No doubt Crockford's had its tragedies, but all its disasters and calamities together would hardly equal a lustre of the ruthless havoc which has ensued from its suppression.

Nevertheless, in 1835 men made books, and Mr. Rodney was not inexpert in a composition which requires no ordinary qualities of character and intelligence; method, judgment, self-restraint, not too much imagination, perception of character, and powers of calculation. All these qualities were now in active demand and

exercise; for the Derby was at hand, and the Rodney family, deeply interested in the result, were to attend the celebrated festival.

One of the young gentlemen, who sometimes smoked a cigar and sometimes tasted a lobster in their parlour, and who seemed alike and equally devoted to Mrs. Rodney and her sister, insisted upon taking them to Epsom in his drag, and they themselves were to select the party to accompany them. That was not difficult, for they were naturally all friends of their munificent host with one exception. Imogene stipulated that Endymion should be asked, and Mr. Rodney supported the suggestion. 'He is the son of the privy councillor the Right Hon. William Pitt Ferrars, my earliest and my best friend, and in a certain sense is under my care.'

The drive to the Derby was not then shorn of its humours and glories. It was the Carnival of England, with equipages as numerous and various, and with banter not less quick and witty. It was a bright day—a day, no doubt, of wild hopes and terrible fears, but yet, on the whole, of joy and exultation.

And no one was happier and prouder than pretty Mrs. Rodney, exquisitely dressed and sitting on the box of a patrician drag, beside its noble owner. On the seat behind them was Imogene, with Endymion on one side, and on the other the individual 'who might one day be a peer.' Mr. Rodney and some others, including Mr. Vigo, faced a couple of grooms, who sat with folded arms and unmoved countenances, fastidiously stolid amid all the fun, and grave even when they opened the champagne.

The right horse won. Mr. Rodney and his friends pocketed a good stake, and they demolished their luncheon of luxuries with frantic gaiety.

'It is almost as happy as our little suppers in Warwick Street,' whispered their noble driver to his companion.

'Oh! much more than anything you can find there,' simpered Mrs. Rodney.

'I declare to you, some of the happiest hours of my life have been passed in Warwick Street,' gravely murmured her friend.

'I wish I could believe that,' said Mrs. Rodney.

As for Endymion, he enjoyed himself amazingly. The whole scene was new to him —he had never been at a race before, and this was the most famous of races. He did not know he had betted, but he found he too had won a little money, Mr. Rodney having put him on something, though what that meant he had not the remotest idea. Imogene, however, assured him it was all right—Mr. Rodney constantly put her on something. He enjoyed the luncheon too; the cold chicken, and the French pies, the wondrous salads, and the iced champagne. It seemed that Imogene was always taking care that his plate or his glass should be filled. Everything was delightful, and his noble host, who, always courteous, had hitherto been reserved, called him 'Ferrars.'

What with the fineness of the weather, the inspiration of the excited and countless multitude, the divine stimulus of the luncheon, the kindness of his charming companions, and the general feeling of enjoyment and success that seemed to pervade his being, Endymion felt

as if he were almost acting a distinguished part in some splendid triumph of antiquity, as returning home, the four splendid dark chestnuts swept along, two of their gay company playing bugles, and the grooms sitting with folded arms of haughty indifference.

Just at this moment his eye fell upon an omnibus full, inside and out, of clerks in his office. There was a momentary stoppage, and while he returned the salute of several of them, his quick eye could not avoid recognising the slightly surprised glance of Trenchard, the curious amazement of Seymour Hicks, and the indignant astonishment of St. Barbe.

'Our friend Ferrars seems in tiptop company,' said Trenchard.

'That may have been a countess on the box,' said Seymour Hicks, 'for I observed an earl's coronet on the drag. I cannot make out who it is.'

'There is no more advantage in going with four horses than with two,' said St. Barbe; 'indeed, I believe you go slower. It is mere pride; puffed-up vanity. I should like to send those two grooms with their folded

arms to the galleys—I hate those fellows. For my part, I never was behind four horses except in a stage-coach. No peer of the realm ever took me on his drag. However, a day of reckoning will come ; the people won't stand this much longer.'

Jawett was not there, for he disapproved of races.

CHAPTER XXII.

ENDYMION had to encounter a rather sharp volley when he went to the office next morning. After some general remarks as to the distinguished party which he had accompanied to the races, Seymour Hicks could not resist inquiring, though with some circumlocution, whether the lady was a countess. The lady was not a countess. Who was the lady ? The lady was Mrs. Rodney. Who was Mrs. Rodney ? She was the wife of Mr. Rodney, who accompanied her. Was Mr. Rodney a relation of Lord Rodney ? Endymion believed he was not a relation of Lord Rodney. Who was Mr. Rodney then ?

'Mr. Rodney is an old friend of my father.'

This natural solution of doubts and difficulties arrested all further inquiry. Generally speaking, the position of Endymion in his new

life was satisfactory. He was regular and assiduous in his attendance at his office, was popular with his comrades, and was cherished by his chief, who had even invited him to dinner. His duties were certainly at present mechanical, but they were associated with an interesting profession; and humble as was his lot, he began to feel the pride of public life. He continued to be a regular guest at Joe's, and was careful not to seem to avoid the society of his fellow-clerks in the evenings, for he had an instinctive feeling that it was as well they should not become acquainted with his circle in Warwick Street. And yet to him the attractions of that circle became daily more difficult to resist. And often when he was enduring the purgatory of the Divan, listening to the snarls of St. Barbe over the shameful prosperity of everybody in this world except the snarler, or perhaps went half-price to the pit of Drury Lane with the critical Trenchard, he was, in truth, restless and absent, and his mind was in another place, indulging in visions which he did not care to analyse, but which were very agreeable.

One evening, shortly after the expedition to Epsom, while the rest were playing a rubber, Imogene said to him, 'I wish you to be friends with Mr. Vigo; I think he might be of use to you.'

Mr. Vigo was playing whist at this moment; his partner was Sylvia, and they were playing against Mr. Rodney and Waldershare.

Waldershare was the tenant of the second floor. He was the young gentleman 'who might some day be a peer.' He was a young man of about three or four and twenty years; fair, with short curly brown hair and blue eyes; not exactly handsome, but with a countenance full of expression, and the index of quick emotions, whether of joy or of anger. Waldershare was the only child of a younger son of a patrician house, and had inherited from his father a moderate but easy fortune. He had been the earliest lodger of the Rodneys, and, taking advantage of the Tory reaction, had just been returned to the House of Commons.

What he would do there was a subject of interesting speculation to his numerous friends, and it may be said admirers. Waldershare

was one of those vivid and brilliant organisations which exercise a peculiarly attractive influence on youth. He had been the hero of the debating club at Cambridge, and many believed in consequence that he must become prime minister. He was witty and fanciful, and, though capricious and bad-tempered, could flatter and caress. At Cambridge he had introduced the new Oxford heresy, of which Nigel Penruddock was a votary. Waldershare prayed and fasted, and swore by Laud and Strafford. He took, however, a more eminent degree at Paris than at his original Alma Mater, and becoming passionately addicted to French literature, his views respecting both Church and State became modified—at least in private. His entrance into English society had been highly successful, and as he had a due share of vanity and was by no means free from worldliness, he had enjoyed and pursued his triumphs. But his versatile nature, which required not only constant, but novel excitement, became palled, even with the society of duchesses. There was a monotony in the splendour of aristocratic life which

wearied him, and for some time he had persuaded himself that the only people who understood the secret of existence were the family under whose roof he lodged.

Waldershare was profligate, but sentimental; unprincipled, but romantic; the child of whim, and the slave of an imagination so freakish and deceptive that it was always impossible to foretell his course. He was alike capable of sacrificing all his feelings to worldly considerations or of forfeiting the world for a visionary caprice. At present his favourite scheme, and one to which he seemed really attached, was to educate Imogene. Under his tuition he had persuaded himself that she would turn out what he styled 'a great woman.' An age of vast change, according to Waldershare, was impending over us. There was no male career in which one could confide. Most men of mark would probably be victims, but 'a great woman' must always make her way. Whatever the circumstances, she would adapt herself to them; if necessary, would mould and fashion them. His dream was that Imogene should go forth and conquer the world,

and that in the sunset of life he should find a refuge in some corner of her palaces.

Imogene was only a child when Waldershare first became a lodger. She used to bring his breakfast to his drawing-room and arrange his table. He encountered her one day, and he requested her to remain, and always preside over his meal. He fell in love with her name, and wrote her a series of sonnets, idealising her past, panegyrising her present, and prophetic of her future life. Imogene, who was neither shy nor obtrusive, was calm amid all his vagaries, humoured his fancies, even when she did not understand them, and read his verses as she would a foreign language which she was determined to master.

Her culture, according to Waldershare, was to be carried on chiefly by conversation. She was not to read, or at least not to read much, until her taste was formed and she had acquired the due share of previous knowledge necessary to profitable study. As Waldershare was eloquent, brilliant, and witty, Imogene listened to him with wondering interest and amusement, even when she found some

difficulty in following him; but her apprehension was so quick and her tact so fine, that her progress, though she was almost unconscious of it, was remarkable. Sometimes in the evening, while the others were smoking together or playing whist, Waldershare and Imogene, sitting apart, were engaged in apparently the most interesting converse. It was impossible not to observe the animation and earnestness of Waldershare, and the great attention with which his companion responded to his representations. Yet all this time he was only giving her a lecture on Madame de Sévigné.

Waldershare used to take Imogene to the National Gallery and Hampton Court, and other delightful scenes of popular education, but of late Mrs. Rodney had informed her sister that she was no longer young enough to permit these expeditions. Imogene accepted the announcement without a murmur, but it occasioned Waldershare several sonnets of heartrending remonstrance. Imogene continued, however, to make his breakfast, and kept his parliamentary papers in order, which

he never could manage, but the mysteries of which Imogene mastered with feminine quickness and precision. Whenever Waldershare was away he always maintained a constant correspondence with Imogene. In this he communicated everything to her without the slightest reserve; describing everything he saw, almost everything he heard, pages teeming with anecdotes of a world of which she could know nothing—the secrets of courts and coteries, memoirs of princes and ministers, of dandies and dames of fashion. 'If anything happens to me,' Waldershare would say to Imogene, 'this correspondence may be worth thousands to you, and when it is published it will connect your name with mine, and assist my grand idea of your becoming "a great woman."'

'But I do not know Mr. Vigo,' whispered Endymion to Imogene.

'But you have met him here, and you went together to Epsom. It is enough. He is going to ask you to dine with him on Saturday. We shall be there, and Mr. Waldershare is going. He has a beautiful place,

and it will be very pleasant.' And exactly as Imogene had anticipated, Mr. Vigo, in the course of the evening, did ask Endymion to do him the honour of becoming his guest.

The villa of Mr. Vigo was on the banks of the Thames, and had once belonged to a noble customer. The Palladian mansion contained a suite of chambers of majestic dimensions—lofty ceilings, rich cornices, and vast windows of plate glass; the gardens were rich with the products of conservatories which Mr. Vigo had raised with every modern improvement, and a group of stately cedars supported the dignity of the scene and gave to it a name. Beyond, a winding walk encircled a large field which Mr. Vigo called the park, and which sparkled with gold and silver pheasants, and the keeper lived in a newly-raised habitation at the extreme end, which took the form of a Swiss cottage.

The Rodney family, accompanied by Mr. Waldershare and Endymion, went to the Cedars by water. It was a delightful afternoon of June, the river warm and still, and the soft, fitful western breeze occasionally

rich with the perfume of the gardens of Putney and Chiswick. Waldershare talked the whole way. It was a rhapsody of fancy, fun, knowledge, anecdote, brilliant badinage—even passionate seriousness. Sometimes he recited poetry, and his voice was musical; and then, when he had attuned his companions to a sentimental pitch, he would break into mockery, and touch with delicate satire every mood of human feeling. Endymion listened to him in silence and admiration. He had never heard Waldershare talk before, and he had never heard anybody like him. All this time, what was now, and ever, remarkable in Waldershare were his manners. They were finished, even to courtliness. Affable and winning, he was never familiar. He always addressed Sylvia as if she were one of those duchesses round whom he used to linger. He would bow deferentially to her remarks, and elicit from some of her casual observations an acute or graceful meaning, of which she herself was by no means conscious. The bow of Waldershare was a study. Its grace and ceremony must have been organic;

for there was no traditionary type in existence from which he could have derived or inherited it. He certainly addressed Imogene and spoke of her by her Christian name; but this was partly because he was in love with the name, and partly because he would persist in still treating her as a child. But his manner to her always was that of tender respect. She was almost as silent as Endymion during their voyage, but not less attentive to her friend. Mr. Rodney was generally silent, and never opened his mouth on this occasion except in answer to an inquiry from his wife as to whom a villa might belong, and it seemed always that he knew every villa, and everyone to whom they belonged.

The sisters were in demi-toilette, which seemed artless, though in fact it was profoundly devised. Sylvia was the only person who really understood the meaning of 'simplex munditiis,' and this was one of the secrets of her success. There were some ladies, on the lawn of the Cedars when they arrived, not exactly of their school, and who were finely and fully dressed. Mrs. Gamme was the wife

of a sporting attorney, a friend of Mr. Vigo, and who also, having a villa at hand, was looked upon as a country neighbour. Mrs. Gamme was universally recognised to be a fine woman, and she dressed up to her reputation. She was a famous whist-player at high points, and dealt the cards with hands covered with diamond rings. Another country neighbour was the chief partner in the celebrated firm of Hooghley, Dacca and Co., dealers in Indian and other shawls. Mr. Hooghley had married a celebrated actress, and was proud and a little jealous of his wife. Mrs. Hooghley had always an opportunity at the Cedars of meeting some friends in her former profession, for Mr. Vigo liked to be surrounded by genius and art. 'I must have talent,' he would exclaim, as he looked round at the amusing and motley multitude assembled at his splendid entertainments. And to-day upon his lawn might be observed the first tenor of the opera and a prima-donna who had just arrived, several celebrated members of the English stage of both sexes, artists of great reputation, whose principal works

already adorned the well-selected walls of the Cedars, a danseuse or two of celebrity, some literary men, as Mr. Vigo styled them, who were chiefly brethren of the periodical press, and more than one member of either house of parliament.

Just as the party were preparing to leave the lawn and enter the dining-room arrived, breathless and glowing, the young earl who had driven the Rodneys to the Derby.

'A shaver, my dear Vigo! Only returned to town this afternoon, and found your invitation. How fortunate!' And then he looked around, and recognising Mrs. Rodney was immediately at her side. 'I must have the honour of taking you in to dinner. I got your note, but only by this morning's post.'

The dinner was a banquet,—a choice bouquet before every guest, turtle and venison and piles of whitebait, and pine-apples of prodigious size, and bunches of grapes that had gained prizes. The champagne seemed to flow in fountains, and was only interrupted that the guest might quaff Burgundy or taste Tokay. But what was more delightful than

all was the enjoyment of all present, and especially of their host. That is a rare sight. Banquets are not rare, nor choice guests, nor gracious hosts; but when do we ever see a person enjoy anything? But these gay children of art and whim, and successful labour and happy speculation, some of them very rich and some of them without a sou, seemed only to think of the festive hour and all its joys. Neither wealth nor poverty brought them cares. Every face sparkled, every word seemed witty, and every sound seemed sweet. A band played upon the lawn during the dinner, and were succeeded, when the dessert commenced, by strange choruses from singers of some foreign land, who for the first time aired their picturesque costumes on the banks of the Thames.

When the ladies had withdrawn to the saloon, the first comic singer of the age excelled himself; and when they rejoined their fair friends, the primo-tenore and the prima-donna gave them a grand scena, succeeded by the English performers in a favourite scene irom a famous farce. Then Mrs. Gamme had

an opportunity of dealing with her diamond rings, and the rest danced—a waltz of whirling grace, or merry cotillon of jocund bouquets.

'Well, Clarence,' said Waldershare to the young earl, as they stood for a moment apart, 'was I right?'

'By Jove! yes. It is the only life. You were quite right. We should indeed be fools to sacrifice ourselves to the conventional.'

The Rodney party returned home in the drag of the last speaker. They were the last to retire, as Mr. Vigo wished for one cigar with his noble friend. As he bade farewell, and cordially, to Endymion, he said, 'Call on me to-morrow morning in Burlington Street in your way to your office. Do not mind the hour. I am an early bird.'

CHAPTER XXIII.

'It is no favour,' said Mr. Vigo; 'it is not even an act of friendliness; it is a freak, and it is my freak; the favour, if there be one, is conferred by you.'

'But I really do not know what to say,' said Endymion, hesitating and confused.

'I am not a classical scholar,' said Mr. Vigo, 'but there are two things which I think I understand—men and horses. I like to back them both when I think they ought to win.'

'But I am scarcely a man,' said Endymion, rather piteously, 'and I sometimes think I shall never win anything.'

'That is my affair,' replied Mr. Vigo; 'you are a yearling, and I have formed my judgment as to your capacity. What I wish to do in your case is what I have done in

others, and some memorable ones. Dress does not make a man, but it often makes a successful one. The most precious stone, you know, must be cut and polished. I shall enter your name in my books for an unlimited credit, and no account to be settled till you are a privy councillor. I do not limit the credit, because you are a man of sense and a gentleman, and will not abuse it. But be quite as careful not to stint yourself as not to be needlessly extravagant. In the first instance, you would be interfering with my experiment, and that would not be fair.'

This conversation took place in Mr. Vigo's counting-house the morning after the entertainment at his villa. Endymion called upon Mr. Vigo in his way to his office, as he had been requested to do, and Mr. Vigo had expressed his wishes and intentions with regard to Endymion as intimated in the preceding remarks.

'I have known many an heiress lost by her suitor being ill-dressed,' said Mr. Vigo. 'You must dress according to your age, your pursuits, your object in life; you must dress

too, in some cases, according to your set. In youth a little fancy is rather expected, but if political life be your object, it should be avoided, at least after one-and-twenty. I am dressing two brothers now, men of considerable position; one is a mere man of pleasure, the other will probably be a minister of state. They are as like as two peas, but were I to dress the dandy and the minister the same, it would be bad taste—it would be ridiculous. No man gives me the trouble which Lord Eglantine does; he has not made up his mind whether he will be a great poet or prime minister. "You must choose, my lord," I tell him. "I cannot send you out looking like Lord Byron if you mean to be a Canning or a Pitt." I have dressed a great many of our statesmen and orators, and I always dressed them according to their style and the nature of their duties. What all men should avoid is the "shabby genteel." No man ever gets over it. I will save you from that. You had better be in rags.'

CHAPTER XXIV.

When the twins had separated, they had resolved on a system of communication which had been, at least on the part of Myra, scrupulously maintained. They were to interchange letters every week, and each letter was to assume, if possible, the shape of a journal, so that when they again met no portion of the interval should be a blank in their past lives. There were few incidents in the existence of Myra; a book, a walk, a visit to the rectory, were among the chief. The occupations of their father were unchanged, and his health seemed sustained, but that of her mother was not satisfactory. Mrs. Ferrars had never rallied since the last discomfiture of her political hopes, and had never resumed her previous tenour of life. She was secluded, her spirits uncertain, moods of depression

succeeded by fits of unaccountable excitement, and, on the whole, Myra feared a general and chronic disturbance of her nervous system. His sister prepared Endymion for encountering a great change in their parent when he returned home. Myra, however, never expatiated on the affairs of Hurstley. Her annals in this respect were somewhat dry. She fulfilled her promise of recording them, but no more. Her pen was fuller and more eloquent in her comments on the life of her brother and of the new characters with whom he had become acquainted. She delighted to hear about Mr. Jawett, and especially about Mr. St. Barbe, and was much pleased that he had been to the Derby, though she did not exactly collect who were his companions. Did he go with that kind Mr. Trenchard? It would seem, that Endymion's account of the Rodney family had been limited to vague though earnest acknowledgments of their great civility and attention, which added much to the comfort of his life. Impelled by some of these grateful though general remarks, Mrs. Ferrars, in a paroxysm of stately grati-

tude, had sent a missive to Sylvia, such as a sovereign might address to a deserving subject, at the same time acknowledging and commending her duteous services. Such was the old domestic superstition of the Rodneys, that, with all their worldliness, they treasured this effusion as if it had really emanated from the centre of power and courtly favour.

Myra, in her anticipations of speedily meeting her brother, was doomed to disappointment. She had counted on Endymion obtaining some holidays in the usual recess, but in consequence of having so recently joined the office, Endymion was retained for summer and autumnal work, and not until Christmas was there any prospect of his returning home.

The interval between midsummer and that period, though not devoid of seasons of monotony and loneliness, passed in a way not altogether unprofitable to Endymion. Waldershare, who had begun to notice him, seemed to become interested in his career. Waldershare knew all about his historic ancestor, Endymion Carey. The bubbling imagination

of Waldershare clustered with a sort of wild fascination round a living link with the age of the cavaliers. He had some Stuart blood in his veins, and his ancestors had fallen at Edgehill and Marston Moor. Waldershare, whose fancies alternated between Strafford and St. Just, Archbishop Laud and the Goddess of Reason, reverted for the moment to his visions on the banks of the Cam, and the brilliant rhapsodies of his boyhood. His converse with Nigel Penruddock had prepared Endymion in some degree for these mysteries, and perhaps it was because Waldershare found that Endymion was by no means ill-informed on these matters, and therefore there was less opportunity of dazzling and moulding him, which was a passion with Waldershare, that he soon quitted the Great Rebellion for pastures new, and impressed upon his pupil that all that had occurred before the French Revolution was ancient history. The French Revolution had introduced the cosmopolitan principle into human affairs instead of the national, and no public man could succeed who did not comprehend and acknowledge that truth. Wal-

dershare lent Endymion books, and books with which otherwise he would not have become acquainted. Unconsciously to himself, the talk of Waldershare, teeming with knowledge, and fancy, and playfulness, and airy sarcasm of life, taught him something of the art of conversation—to be prompt without being stubborn, to refute without argument, and to clothe grave matters in a motley garb.

But in August Waldershare disappeared, and at the beginning of September, even the Rodneys had gone to Margate. St. Barbe was the only clerk left in Endymion's room. They dined together almost every day, and went on the top of an omnibus to many a suburban paradise. 'I tell you what,' said St. Barbe, as they were watching one day together the humours of the world in the crowded tea-garden and bustling bowling-green of Canonbury Tavern; 'a fellow might get a good chapter out of this scene. I could do it, but I will not. What is the use of lavishing one's brains on an ungrateful world? Why, if that fellow Gushy were to write a description of this place, which he would do

like a penny-a-liner drunk with ginger beer, every countess in Mayfair would be reading him, not knowing, the idiot, whether she ought to smile or shed tears, and sending him cards with "at home" upon them as large as life. Oh! it is disgusting! absolutely disgusting. It is a nefarious world, sir. You will find it out some day. I am as much robbed by that fellow Gushy as men are on the highway. He is appropriating my income, and the income of thousands of honest fellows. And then he pretends he is writing for the people! The people! What does he know about the people? Annals of the New Cut and Saffron Hill. He thinks he will frighten some lord, who will ask him to dinner. And that he calls Progress. I hardly know which is the worst class in this country—the aristocracy, the middle class, or what they call the people. I hate them all.'

About the fall of the leaf the offices were all filled again, and among the rest Trenchard returned. 'His brother has been ill,' said St. Barbe. 'They say that Trenchard is very fond of him. Fond of a brother who keeps

him out of four thousand pounds per annum! What will man not say? And yet I could not go and congratulate Trenchard on his brother's death. It would be "bad taste." Trenchard would perhaps never speak to me again, though he had been lying awake all night chuckling over the event. And Gushy takes an amiable view of this world of hypocrisy and plunder. And that is why Gushy is so popular!'

There was one incident at the beginning of November, which eventually exercised no mean influence on the life of Endymion. Trenchard offered one evening to introduce him as a guest to a celebrated debating society, of which Trenchard was a distinguished member. This society had grown out of the Union at Cambridge, and was originally intended to have been a metropolitan branch of that famous association. But in process of time it was found that such a constitution was too limited to ensure those numbers and that variety of mind desirable in such an institution. It was therefore opened to the whole world duly qualified. The predominant ele-

ment, however, for a long time consisted of Cambridge men.

This society used to meet in a large room, fitted up as much like the House of Commons as possible, and which was in Freemasons' Tavern, in Great Queen Street. Some hundred and fifty members were present when Endymion paid his first visit there, and the scene to Endymion was novel and deeply interesting. Though only a guest, he was permitted to sit in the body of the chamber, by the side of Trenchard, who kindly gave him some information, as the proceedings advanced, as to the principal personages who took part in them.

The question to-night was, whether the decapitation of Charles the First were a justifiable act, and the debate was opened in the affirmative by a young man with a singularly sunny face and a voice of music. His statement was clear and calm. Though nothing could be more uncompromising than his opinions, it seemed that nothing could be fairer than his facts.

'That is Hortensius,' said Trenchard; 'he

will be called this term. They say he did nothing at the university, and is too idle to do anything at the bar; but I think highly of him. You should hear him in reply.'

The opening speech was seconded by a very young man, in a most artificial style, remarkable for its superfluity of intended sarcasm, which was delivered in a highly elaborate tone, so that the speaker seemed severe without being keen.

''Tis the new Cambridge style,' whispered Trenchard, 'but it will not go down here.'

The question having been launched, Spruce arose, a very neat speaker; a little too mechanical, but plausible. Endymion was astonished at the dextrous turns in his own favour which he gave to many of the statements of Hortensius, and how he mangled and massacred the seconder, who had made a mistake in a date.

'He is the Tory leader,' said Trenchard. 'There are not twenty Tories in the Union, but we always listen to him. He is sharp. Jawett will answer him.'

And, accordingly, that great man rose.

Jawett, in dulcet tones of philanthropy, intimated that he was not opposed to the decapitation of kings; on the contrary, if there were no other way of getting rid of them, he would have recourse to such a method. But he did not think the case before them was justifiable.

'Always crotchety,' whispered Trenchard.

Jawett thought the whole conception of the opening speech erroneous. It proceeded on the assumption that the execution of Charles was the act of the people; on the contrary, it was an intrigue of Cromwell, who was the only person who profited by it.

Cromwell was vindicated and panegyrised in a flaming speech, by Montreal, who took this opportunity of denouncing alike kings and bishops, Church and State, with powerful invective, terminating his address by the expression of an earnest hope that he might be spared to witness the inevitable Commonwealth of England.

'He only lost his election for Rattleton by ten votes,' said Trenchard. 'We call him the Lord Protector, and his friends here think he will be so.'

The debate was concluded, after another hour, by Hortensius, and Endymion was struck by the contrast between his first and second manner. Safe from reply, and reckless in his security, it is not easy to describe the audacity of his retorts, or the tumult of his eloquence. Rapid, sarcastic, humorous, picturesque, impassioned, he seemed to carry everything before him, and to resemble his former self in nothing but the music of his voice, which lent melody to scorn, and sometimes reached the depth of pathos.

Endymion walked home with Mr. Trenchard, and in a musing mood. 'I should not care how lazy I was,' said Endymion, 'if I could speak like Hortensius.'

CHAPTER XXV.

THE snow was falling about the time when the Swindon coach, in which Endymion was a passenger, was expected at Hurstley, and the snow had been falling all day. Nothing had been more dreary than the outward world, or less entitled to the merry epithet which is the privilege of the season. The gardener had been despatched to the village inn, where the coach stopped, with a lantern and cloaks and umbrellas. Within the house the huge blocks of smouldering beech sent forth a hospitable heat, and, whenever there was a sound, Myra threw cones on the inflamed mass, that Endymion might be welcomed with a blaze. Mrs. Ferrars, who had appeared to-day, though late, and had been very nervous and excited, broke down half an hour before her son could arrive, and, murmuring that she would re-

appear, had retired. Her husband was apparently reading, but his eye wandered and his mind was absent from the volume.

The dogs barked, Mr. Ferrars threw down his book, Myra forgot her cones; the door burst open, and she was in her brother's arms.

'And where is mamma?' said Endymion, after he had greeted his father.

'She will be here directly,' said Mr. Ferrars. 'You are late, and the suspense of your arrival a little agitated her.'

Three quarters of a year had elapsed since the twins had parted, and they were at that period of life when such an interval often produces no slight changes in personal appearance. Endymion, always tall for his years, had considerably grown; his air, and manner, and dress were distinguished. But three quarters of a year had produced a still greater effect upon his sister. He had left her a beautiful girl: her beauty was not less striking, but it was now the beauty of a woman. Her mien was radiant but commanding, and her brow, always remarkable, was singularly impressive.

They stood in animated converse before

the fire, Endymion between his father and his sister and retaining of each a hand, when Mr. Ferrars nodded to Myra and said, 'I think now;' and Myra, not reluctantly, but not with happy eagerness, left the room.

'She is gone for your poor mother,' said Mr. Ferrars; 'we are uneasy about her, my dear boy.'

Myra was some time away, and when she returned she was alone. 'She says she must see him first in her room,' said Myra, in a low voice, to her father; 'but that will never do; you or I must go with him.'

'You had better go,' said Mr. Ferrars.

She took her brother's hand and led him away. 'I go with you, to prevent dreadful scenes,' said his sister on the staircase. 'Try to behave just as in old times, and as if you saw no change.'

Myra went into the chamber first, to give to her mother, if possible, the keynote of the interview, and of which she had already furnished the prelude. 'We are all so happy to see Endymion again, dear mamma. Papa is quite gay.'

And then when Endymion, answering his sister's beckon, entered, Mrs. Ferrars rushed forward with a sort of laugh, and cried out, 'Oh! I am so happy to see you again, my child. I feel quite gay.'

He embraced her, but he could not believe it was his mother. A visage at once haggard and bloated had supplanted that soft and rich countenance which had captivated so many. A robe concealed her attenuated frame; but the lustrous eyes were bleared and bloodshot, and the accents of the voice, which used to be at once melodious and a little drawling, hoarse, harsh, and hurried.

She never stopped talking; but it was all in one key, and that the prescribed one—her happiness at his arrival, the universal gaiety it had produced, and the merry Christmas they were to keep. After a time she began to recur to the past, and to sigh; but instantly Myra interfered with 'You know, mamma, you are to dine downstairs to-day, and you will hardly have time to dress;' and she motioned to Endymion to retire.

Mrs. Ferrars kept the dinner waiting a

long time, and, when she entered the room, it was evident that she was painfully excited. She had a cap on, and had used some rouge.

'Endymion must take me in to dinner,' she hurriedly exclaimed as she entered, and then grasped her son's arm.

It seemed a happy and even a merry dinner, and yet there was something about it forced and constrained. Mrs. Ferrars talked a great deal, and Endymion told them a great many anecdotes of those men and things which most interested them, and Myra seemed to be absorbed in his remarks and narratives, and his mother would drink his health more than once, when suddenly she went into hysterics, and all was anarchy. Mr. Ferrars looked distressed and infinitely sad; and Myra, putting her arm round her mother, and whispering words of calm or comfort, managed to lead her out of the room, and neither of them returned.

'Poor creature!' said Mr. Ferrars with a sigh. 'Seeing you has been too much for her.'

The next morning Endymion and his

sister paid a visit to the rectory, and there they met Nigel, who was passing his Christmas at home. This was a happy meeting. The rector had written an essay on squirrels, and showed them a glass containing that sportive little animal in all its frolic forms. Farmer Thornberry had ordered a path to be cleared on the green from the hall to the rectory; and 'that is all,' said Mrs. Penruddock, 'we have to walk upon, except the high road. The snow has drifted to such a degree that it is impossible to get to the Chase. I went out the day before yesterday with Carlo as a guide. When I did not clearly make out my way, I sent him forward, and sometimes I could only see his black head emerging from the snow. So I had to retreat.'

Mrs. Ferrars did not appear this day. Endymion visited her in her room. He found her flighty and incoherent. She seemed to think that he had returned permanently to Hurstley, and said she never had any good opinion of the scheme of his leaving them. If it had been the Foreign Office, as was promised, and his father had been in the

Cabinet, which was his right, it might have been all very well. But, if he were to leave home, he ought to have gone into the Guards, and it was not too late. And then they might live in a small house in town, and look after him. There were small houses in Wilton Crescent, which would do very well. Besides, she herself wanted change of air. Hurstley did not agree with her. She had no appetite. She never was well except in London, or Wimbledon. She wished that, as Endymion was here, he would speak to his father on the subject. She saw no reason why they should not live at their place at Wimbledon as well as here. It was not so large a house, and, therefore, would not be so expensive.

Endymion's holiday was only to last a week, and Myra seemed jealous of his sparing any portion of it to Nigel; yet the rector's son was sedulous in his endeavours to enjoy the society of his former companion. There seemed some reason for his calling at the hall every day. Mr. Ferrars broke through his habits, and invited Nigel to dine with them;

and after dinner, saying that he would visit Mrs. Ferrars, who was unwell, left them alone. It was the only time they had yet been alone. Endymion found that there was no change in the feelings and views of Nigel respecting Church matters, except that his sentiments and opinions were more assured, and, if possible, more advanced. He would not tolerate any reference to the state of the nation; it was the state of the Church which engrossed his being. No government was endurable that was not divine. The Church was divine, and on that he took his stand.

Nigel was to take his degree next term, and orders as soon as possible. He looked forward with confidence, after doubtless a period of disturbance, confusion, probably violence, and even anarchy, to the establishment of an ecclesiastical polity that would be catholic throughout the realm. Endymion just intimated the very contrary opinions that Jawett held upon these matters, and mentioned, though not as an adherent, some of the cosmopolitan sentiments of Waldershare.

'The Church is cosmopolitan,' said Nigel;

'the only practicable means by which you can attain to identity of motive and action.'

Then they rejoined Myra, but Nigel soon recurred to the absorbing theme. His powers had much developed since he and Endymion used to wander together over Hurstley Chase. He had great eloquence, his views were startling and commanding, and his expressions forcible and picturesque. All was heightened, too, by his striking personal appearance and the beauty of his voice. He seemed something between a young prophet and an inquisitor; a remarkable blending of enthusiasm and self-control.

A person more experienced in human nature than Endymion, might have observed that all this time, while Nigel was to all appearance chiefly addressing himself to Endymion, he was, in fact, endeavouring to impress his sister. Endymion knew, from the correspondence of Myra, that Nigel had been, especially in the summer, much at Hurstley; and when he was alone with his sister, he could not help remarking, 'Nigel is as strong as ever in his views.'

'Yes,' she replied; 'he is very clever and very good-looking. It is a pity he is going into the Church. I do not like clergymen.'

On the third day of the visit, Mrs. Ferrars was announced to be unwell, and in the evening very unwell; and Mr. Ferrars sent to the nearest medical man, and he was distant, to attend her. The medical man did not arrive until past midnight, and, after visiting his patient, looked grave. She had fever, but of what character it was difficult to decide. The medical man had brought some remedies with him, and he stayed the night at the hall. It was a night of anxiety and alarm, and the household did not retire until nearly the break of dawn.

The next day it seemed that the whole of the Penruddock family were in the house. Mrs. Penruddock insisted on nursing Mrs. Ferrars, and her husband looked as if he thought he might be wanted. It was unreasonable that Nigel should be left alone. His presence, always pleasing, was a relief to an anxious family, and who were beginning to get alarmed. The fever did not subside.

On the contrary, it increased, and there were other dangerous symptoms. There was a physician of fame at Oxford, whom Nigel wished they would call in. Matters were too pressing to wait for posts, and too complicated to trust to an ordinary messenger. Nigel, who was always well mounted, was in his saddle in an instant. He seemed to be all resource, consolation, and energy: 'If I am fortunate, he will be here in four hours; at all events, I will not return alone.'

Four terrible hours were these: Mr. Ferrars, restless and sad, and listening with a vacant or an absent look to the kind and unceasing talk of the rector; Myra, silent in her mother's chamber; and Endymion, wandering about alone with his eyes full of tears. This was the Merrie Christmas he had talked of, and this his long-looked-for holiday. He could think of nothing but his mother's kindness; and the days gone by, when she was so bright and happy, came back to him with painful vividness. It seemed to him that he belonged to a doomed and unhappy family. Youth and its unconscious mood had hitherto

driven this thought from his mind; but it occurred to him now, and would not be driven away.

Nigel was fortunate. Before sunset he returned to Hurstley in a postchaise with the Oxford physician, whom he had furnished with an able and accurate diagnosis of the case. All that art could devise, and all that devotion could suggest, were lavished on the sufferer, but in vain; and four days afterwards, the last day of Endymion's long-awaited holiday, Mr. Ferrars closed for ever the eyes of that brilliant being, who, with some weaknesses, but many noble qualities, had shared with no unequal spirit the splendour and the adversity of his existence.

CHAPTER XXVI.

NIGEL took a high degree and obtained first-class honours. He was ordained by the bishop of the diocese as soon after as possible. His companions, who looked up to him with every expectation of his eminence and influence, were disappointed, however, in the course of life on which he decided. It was different from that which he had led them to suppose it would be. They had counted on his becoming a resident light of the University, filling its highest offices, and ultimately reaching the loftiest stations in the Church. Instead of that, he announced that he had resolved to become a curate to his father, and that he was about to bury himself in the solitude of Hurstley.

It was in the early summer following the death of Mrs. Ferrars that he settled there.

He was frequently at the hall, and became intimate with Mr. Ferrars. Notwithstanding the difference of age, there was between them a sympathy of knowledge and thought. In spite of his decided mind, Nigel listened to Mr. Ferrars with deference, soliciting his judgment, and hanging, as it were, on his accents of wise experience and refined taste. So Nigel became a favourite with Mr. Ferrars; for there are few things more flattering than the graceful submission of an accomplished intellect, and, when accompanied by youth, the spell is sometimes fascinating.

The death of his wife seemed to have been a great blow to Mr. Ferrars. The expression of his careworn, yet still handsome, countenance became, if possible, more saddened. It was with difficulty that his daughter could induce him to take exercise, and he had lost altogether that seeming interest in their outer world which once at least he affected to feel. Myra, though ever content to be alone, had given up herself much to her father since his great sorrow; but she felt that her efforts to distract him from his broodings were not emi-

nently successful, and she hailed with a feeling of relief the establishment of Nigel in the parish, and the consequent intimacy that arose between him and her father.

Nigel and Myra were necessarily under these circumstances thrown much together. As time advanced he passed his evenings generally at the hall, for he was a proficient in the only game which interested Mr. Ferrars, and that was chess. Reading and writing all day, Mr. Ferrars required some remission of attention, and his relaxation was chess. Before the games, and between the games, and during delightful tea-time, and for the happy quarter of an hour which ensued when the chief employment of the evening ceased, Nigel appealed much to Myra, and endeavoured to draw out her mind and feelings. He lent her books, and books that favoured, indirectly at least, his own peculiar views—volumes of divine poesy that had none of the twang of psalmody, tales of tender and sometimes wild and brilliant fancy, but ever full of symbolic truth.

Chess-playing requires complete abstrac-

tion, and Nigel, though he was a double first, occasionally lost a game from a lapse in that condensed attention that secures triumph. The fact is, he was too frequently thinking of something else besides the moves on the board, and his ear was engaged while his eye wandered, if Myra chanced to rise from her seat or make the slightest observation.

The woods were beginning to assume the first fair livery of autumn, when it is beautiful without decay. The lime and the larch had not yet dropped a golden leaf, and the burnished beeches flamed in the sun. Every now and then an occasional oak or elm rose, still as full of deep green foliage as if it were midsummer; while the dark verdure of the pines sprang up with effective contrast amid the gleaming and resplendent chestnuts.

There was a glade at Hurstley, bounded on each side with masses of yew, their dark green forms now studded with crimson berries. Myra was walking one morning in this glade when she met Nigel, who was on one of his daily pilgrimages, and he turned round and walked by her side.

'I am sure I cannot give you news of your brother,' he said, 'but I have had a letter this morning from Endymion. He seems to take great interest in his debating club.'

'I am so glad he has become a member of it,' said Myra. 'That kind Mr. Trenchard, whom I shall never see to thank him for all his goodness to Endymion, proposed him. It occupies his evenings twice a week, and then it gives him subjects to think of and read up in the interval.'

'Yes; it is a good thing,' said Nigel, moodily; 'and if he is destined for public life, which perhaps he may be, no contemptible discipline.'

'Dear boy!' said Myra, with a sigh. 'I do not see what public life he is destined to, except slaving at a desk. But sometimes one has dreams.'

'Yes; we all have dreams,' said Nigel, with an air of abstraction.

'It is impossible to resist the fascination of a fine autumnal morn,' said Myra; 'but give me the long days of summer and its rich

leafy joys. I like to wander about, and dine at nine o'clock.'

'Delightful, doubtless, with a sympathising companion.'

'Endymion was such a charming companion,' said Myra.

'But he has left us,' said Nigel; 'and you are alone.'

'I am alone,' said Myra; 'but I am used to solitude, and I can think of him.'

'Would I were Endymion,' said Nigel, 'to be thought of by you!'

Myra looked at him with something of a stare; but he continued—

'All seasons would be to me fascination, were I only by your side. Yes; I can no longer repress the irresistible confession of my love. I am here, and I am here only, because I love you. I quitted Oxford and all its pride that I might have the occasional delight of being your companion. I was not presumptuous in my thoughts, and believed that would content me; but I can no longer resist the consummate spell, and I offer you my heart and my life.'

'I am amazed; I am a little overwhelmed,' said Myra. 'Pardon me, dear Mr. Penruddock—dear Nigel—you speak of things of which I have not thought.'

'Think of them! I implore you to think of them, and now!'

'We are a fallen family,' said Myra, 'perhaps a doomed one. We are not people to connect yourself with. You have witnessed some of our sorrows, and soothed them. I shall be ever grateful to you for the past. But I sometimes feel our cup is not yet full, and I have long resolved to bear my cross alone. But, irrespective of all other considerations, I can never leave my father.'

'I have spoken to your father,' said Nigel, 'and he approved my suit.'

'While my father lives I shall not quit him,' said Myra; 'but, let me not mislead you, I do not live for my father—I live for another.'

'For another?' inquired Nigel, with anxiety.

'For one you know. My life is devoted to Endymion. There is a mystic bond between us, originating, perhaps, in the circum-

stance of our birth; for we are twins. I never mean to embarrass him with a sister's love, and perhaps hereafter may see less of him even than I see now; but I shall be in the world, whatever be my lot, high or low—the active, stirring world—working for him, thinking alone of him. Yes; moulding events and circumstances in his favour;' and she spoke with fiery animation. 'I have brought myself, by long meditation, to the conviction that a human being with a settled purpose must accomplish it, and that nothing can resist a will that will stake even existence for its fulfilment.'

CHAPTER XXVII.

ENDYMION had returned to his labours, after the death of his mother, much dispirited. Though young and hopeful, his tender heart could not be insensible to the tragic end. There is anguish in the recollection that we have not adequately appreciated the affection of those whom we have loved and lost. It tortured him to feel that he had often accepted with carelessness or indifference the homage of a heart that had been to him ever faithful in its multiplied devotion. Then, though he was not of a melancholy and brooding nature, in this moment of bereavement he could not drive from his mind the consciousness that there had long been hanging over his home a dark lot, as it were, of progressive adversity. His family seemed always sinking, and he felt conscious how the sanguine spirit of his mother

had sustained them in their trials. His father had already made him the depositary of his hopeless cares; and if anything happened to that father, old and worn out before his time, what would become of Myra?

Nigel, who in their great calamity seemed to have thought of everything, and to have done everything, had written to the chief of the office, and also to Mr. Trenchard, explaining the cause of the absence of Endymion from his duties. There were no explanations, therefore, necessary when he reappeared; no complaints, but only sympathy and general kindness. In Warwick Street there was unaffected sorrow; Sylvia wept and went into the prettiest mourning for her patroness, and Mr. Rodney wore a crape on his hat. 'I never saw her,' said Imogene, 'but I am told she was heavenly.'

Waldershare was very kind to Endymion, and used to take him to the House of Commons on interesting evenings, and, if he succeeded in getting Endymion a place under the gallery, would come and talk to him in the course of the night, and sometimes introduce him to the mysteries of Bellamy's, where Endymion had

the satisfaction of partaking of a steak in the presence of statesmen and senators.

'You are in the precincts of public life,' said Waldershare; 'and if you ever enter it, which I think you will,' he would add thoughtfully, 'it will be interesting for you to remember that you have seen these characters, many of whom will then have passed away. Like the shades of a magic lantern,' he added, with something between a sigh and a smile. 'One of my constituents sent me a homily this morning, the burthen of which was, I never thought of death. The idiot! I never think of anything else. It is my weakness. One should never think of death. One should think of life. That is real piety.'

This spring and summer were passed tranquilly by Endymion, but not unprofitably. He never went to any place of public amusement, and, cherishing his sorrow, declined those slight openings to social life which occasionally offered themselves even to him; but he attended his debating club with regularity, and, though silent, studied every subject which was brought before it. It interested

him to compare their sayings and doings with those of the House of Commons, and he found advantage in the critical comparison. Though not in what is styled society, his mind did not rust from the want of intelligent companions. The clear perception, accurate knowledge, and unerring judgment of Trenchard, the fantastic cynicism of St. Barbe, and all the stores of the exuberant and imaginative Waldershare were brought to bear on a young and plastic intelligence, gifted with a quick though not a too profound sensibility which soon ripened into tact, and which, after due discrimination, was tenacious of beneficial impressions.

In the autumn, Endymion returned home for a long visit and a happy one. He found Nigel settled at Hurstley, and almost domesticated at the hall; his father more cheerful than his sister's earlier letters had led him to suppose; and she herself so delighted by the constant companionship of her brother that she seemed to have resumed all her original pride of life.

Nearly two years' acquaintance, however limited, with the world had already exercised

a ripening influence over Endymion. Nigel soon perceived this, though, with a native tact which circumstances had developed, Endymion avoided obtruding his new conclusions upon his former instructor. But that deep and eager spirit, unwilling ever to let a votary escape, and absorbed intellectually by one vast idea, would not be baffled. Nigel had not renounced the early view of Endymion taking orders, and spoke of his London life as an incident which, with his youth, he might in time only look upon as an episode in his existence.

'I trust I shall ever be a devoted son of the Church,' said Endymion; 'but I confess I feel no predisposition to take orders, even if I had the opportunity, which probably I never shall have. If I were to choose my career, it would be public life. I am on the last step of the ladder, and I do not suppose that I can ever be anything but a drudge. But even that would interest me. It brings one in contact with those who are playing the great game. One at least fancies one comprehends something of the government of

mankind. Mr. Waldershare takes me often to the House of Commons, and, I must say, I am passionately fond of it.'

After Endymion's return to London that scene occurred between Nigel and Myra, in the glade at Hurstley, which we have noticed in the preceding chapter. In the evening of that day Nigel did not pay his accustomed visit to the hall, and the father and the daughter were alone. Then it was, notwithstanding evident agitation, and even with some degree of solemnity, that Mr. Ferrars broke to his daughter that there was a subject on which he wished seriously to confer with her.

'Is it about Nigel?' she inquired, with calmness.

'It is about Nigel.'

'I have seen him, and he has spoken to me.'

'And what have you replied?'

'What I fear will not be satisfactory to you, sir, but what is irrevocable.'

'Your union would give me life and hope,' said Mr. Ferrars; and then, as she remained silent, he continued after a pause: 'For its

happiness there seems every security. He is of good family, and with adequate means, and, I firmly believe, no inconsiderable future. His abilities are already recognised; his disposition is noble. As for his personal qualities, you are a fitter judge than I am; but, for my part, I never saw a countenance that more became the beauty and nobility of his character.'

'I think him very good-looking,' said Myra, 'and there is no doubt he is clever, and he has shown himself, on more than one occasion, amiable.'

'Then what more can you require?' said Mr. Ferrars.

'I require nothing; I do not wish to marry.'

'But, my daughter, my dearest daughter,' said Mr. Ferrars, 'bear with the anxiety of a parent who is at least devoted to you. Our separation would be my last and severest sorrow, and I have had many; but there is no necessity to consider that case, for Nigel is content, is more than content, to live as your husband under this roof.'

'So he told me.'

'And that removed one objection that you might naturally feel?'

'I certainly should never leave you, sir,' said Myra, 'and I told Nigel so; but that contingency had nothing to do with my decision. I declined his offer, because I have no wish to marry.'

'Women are born to be married,' said Mr. Ferrars.

'And yet I believe most marriages are unhappy,' said Myra.

'Oh! if your objection to marry Nigel arises from an abstract objection to marriage itself,' said Mr. Ferrars, 'it is a subject which we might talk over calmly, and perhaps remove your prejudices.'

'I have no prejudices against marriage,' rejoined Myra. 'It is likely enough that I may marry some day, and probably make an unhappy marriage; but that is not the question before us. It is whether I should marry Nigel. That cannot be, my dear father, and he knows it. I have assured him so in a manner which cannot be mistaken.'

'We are a doomed family!' exclaimed the unhappy Mr. Ferrars, clasping his hands.

'So I have long felt,' said Myra. 'I can bear our lot; but I want no strangers to be introduced to share its bitterness, and soothe us with their sympathy.'

'You speak like a girl,' said Mr. Ferrars, 'and a headstrong girl, which you always have been. You know not what you are talking about. It is a matter of life or death. Your decorous marriage would have saved us from absolute ruin.'

'Alone, I can meet absolute ruin,' said Myra. 'I have long contemplated such a contingency, and am prepared for it. My marriage with Nigel could hardly save you, sir, from such a visitation, if it be impending. But I trust in that respect, if in no other, you have used a little of the language of exaggeration. I have never received, and I have never presumed to seek, any knowledge of your affairs; but I have assumed, that for your life, somehow or other, you would be permitted to exist without disgrace. If I survive you, I have neither care nor fear.'

CHAPTER XXVIII.

In the following spring a vexatious incident occurred in Warwick Street. The highly-considered county member, who was the yearly tenant of Mr. Rodney's first floor, and had been always a valuable patron, suddenly died. An adjourned debate, a tough beef-steak, a select committee still harder, and an influenza caught at three o'clock in the morning in an imprudent but irresistible walk home with a confidential Lord of the Treasury, had combined very sensibly to affect the income of Mr. Rodney. At first he was sanguine that such a desirable dwelling would soon find a suitable inhabitant, especially as Mr. Waldershare assured him that he would mention the matter to all his friends. But time rolled on, and the rooms were still vacant; and the fastidious Rodneys, who at first

would only listen to a yearly tenant, began to reduce their expectations. Matters had arrived at such a pass in May, that, for the first time in their experience, they actually condescended to hoist an announcement of furnished apartments.

In this state of affairs a cab rattled up to the house one morning, out of which a young gentleman jumped briskly, and, knocking at the door, asked, of the servant who opened it, whether he might see the apartments. He was a young man, apparently not more than one or two and twenty, of a graceful figure, somewhat above the middle height, fair, with a countenance not absolutely regular, but calm and high-bred. His dress was in the best taste, but to a practised eye had something of a foreign cut, and he wore a slight moustache.

'The rooms will suit me,' he said, 'and I have no doubt the price you ask for them is a just one;' and he bowed with high-bred courtesy to Sylvia, who was now in attendance on him, and who stood with her pretty hands in the pretty pockets of her pretty apron.

'I am glad to hear that,' said Sylvia. 'We have never let them before, except to a yearly tenant.'

'And if we suit each other,' said the gentleman, 'I should have no great objection to become such.'

'In these matters,' said Sylvia, after a little hesitation, 'we give and receive references. Mr. Rodney is well known in this neighbourhood and in Westminster generally; but I dare say,' she adroitly added, 'he has many acquaintances known to you, sir.'

'Not very likely,' replied the young gentleman; 'for I am a foreigner, and only arrived in England this morning;' though he spoke English without the slightest accent.

Sylvia looked a little perplexed; but he continued: 'It is quite just that you should be assured to whom you are letting your lodgings. The only reference I can give you is to my banker, but he is almost too great a man for such matters. Perhaps,' he added, pulling out a case from his breast pocket, and taking out of it a note, which he handed to

Sylvia, 'this may assure you that your rent will be paid.'

Sylvia took a rapid glance at the hundred-pound note, and twisting it into her little pocket with apparent *sangfroid*, though she held it with a tight grasp, murmured that it was quite unnecessary, and then offered to give her new lodger an acknowledgment of it.

'That is really unnecessary,' he replied. 'Your appearance commands from me that entire confidence which on your part you very properly refuse to a stranger and a foreigner, like myself.'

'What a charming young man!' thought Sylvia, pressing with emotion her hundred-pound note.

'Now,' continued the young gentleman, 'I will return to the station to release my servant, who is a prisoner there with my luggage. Be pleased to make him at home. I shall myself not return probably till the evening; and in the meantime,' he added, giving Sylvia his card, 'you will admit anything that arrives here addressed to Colonel Albert.'

The settlement of Colonel Albert in Warwick Street was an event of no slight importance. It superseded for a time all other topics of conversation, and was discussed at length in the evenings, especially with Mr. Vigo. Who was he? And in what service was he colonel? Mr. Rodney, like a man of the world, assumed that all necessary information would in time be obtained from the colonel's servant; but even men of the world sometimes miscalculate. The servant, who was a Belgian, had only been engaged by the colonel at Brussels a few days before his departure for England, and absolutely knew nothing of his master, except that he was a gentleman with plenty of money and sufficient luggage. Sylvia, who was the only person who had seen the colonel, was strongly in his favour. Mr. Rodney looked doubtful, and avoided any definite opinion until he had had the advantage of an interview with his new lodger. But this was not easy to obtain. Colonel Albert had no wish to see the master of the house, and, if he ever had that desire, his servant would accordingly communicate it

in the proper quarter. At present he was satisfied with all the arrangements, and wished neither to make nor to receive remarks. The habits of the new lodger were somewhat of a recluse. He was generally engaged in his rooms the whole day, and seldom left them till the evening, and nobody, as yet, had called upon him. Under these circumstances Imogene was instructed to open the matter to Mr. Waldershare when she presided over his breakfast table; and that gentleman said he would make inquiries about the colonel at the Travellers' Club, where Waldershare passed a great deal of his time. 'If he be anybody,' said Mr. Waldershare, 'he is sure in time to be known there, for he will be introduced as a visitor.' At present, however, it turned out that the 'Travellers'' knew nothing of Colonel Albert; and time went on, and Colonel Albert was not introduced as a visitor there.

After a little while there was a change in the habits of the colonel. One morning, about noon, a groom, extremely well appointed, and having under his charge a couple of steeds of breed and beauty, called at War-

wick Street, and the colonel rode out, and was long absent, and after that, every day, and generally at the same hour, mounted his horse. Mr. Rodney was never wearied of catching a glimpse of his distinguished lodger over the blinds of the ground-floor room, and of admiring the colonel's commanding presence in his saddle, distinguished as his seat was alike by its grace and vigour.

In the course of a little time, another incident connected with the colonel occurred which attracted notice and excited interest. Towards the evening a brougham, marked, but quietly, with a foreign coronet, stopped frequently at Mr. Rodney's house, and a visitor to the colonel appeared in the form of a middle-aged gentleman who never gave his name, and evaded, it seemed with practised dexterity, every effort, however adroit, to obtain it. The valet was tried on this head also, and replied with simplicity that he did not know the gentleman's name, but he was always called the Baron.

In the middle of June a packet arrived one day by the coach, from the rector of

Hurstley, addressed to Endymion, announcing his father's dangerous illness, and requesting him instantly to repair home. Myra was too much occupied to write even a line.

CHAPTER XXIX.

It was strange that Myra did not write, were it only a line. It was so unlike her. How often this occurred to Endymion during his wearisome and anxious travel! When the coach reached Hurstley, he found Mr. Penruddock waiting for him. Before he could inquire after his father, that gentleman said, 'Myra is at the rectory; you are to come on there.'

'And my father——?'

'Matters are critical,' said Mr. Penruddock, as it were avoiding a direct answer, and hastening his pace.

It was literally not a five minutes' walk from the village inn to the rectory, and they walked in silence. The rector took Endymion at once into his study; for we can hardly call it a library, though some shelves of books were there, and many stuffed birds.

The rector closed the door with care, and looked distressed; and, beckoning to Endymion to be seated, he said, while still standing and half turning away his head, 'My dear boy, prepare yourself for the worst.'

'Ah! he is gone then! my dear, dear father!' and Endymion burst into passionate tears, and leant on the table, his face hid in his hands.

The rector walked up and down the room with an agitated countenance. He could not deny, it would seem, the inference of Endymion; and yet he did not proffer those consolations which might be urged, and which it became one in his capacity peculiarly to urge.

'I must see Myra,' said Endymion, eagerly, looking up with a wild air and streaming eyes.

'Not yet,' said the rector; 'she is much disturbed. Your poor father is no more; it is too true; but,' and here the rector hesitated, 'he did not die happily.'

'What do you mean?' said Endymion.

'Your poor father had much to try him,' said the rector. 'His life, since he was amongst us here, was a life, for him, of adver-

sity—perhaps of great adversity—yet he bore up against it with a Christian spirit; he never repined. There was much that was noble and exalted in his character. But he never overcame the loss of your dear mother. He was never himself afterwards. He was not always master of himself. I could bear witness to that,' said the rector, talking, as it were, to himself. 'Yes; I could conscientiously give evidence to that effect——'

'What effect?' asked Endymion, with a painful scrutiny.

'I could show,' said the rector, speaking slowly, and in a low voice, 'and others could show, that he was not master of himself when he committed the rash act.'

'O! Mr. Penruddock!' exclaimed Endymion, starting from his chair, and seizing the rector by his arm. 'What is all this?'

'That a great sorrow has come upon you, and your sister, and all of us,' said Mr. Penruddock; 'and you, and she, and all of us must bow before the Divine will in trembling, though in hope. Your father's death was not natural.'

Such was the end of William Pitt Ferrars, on whom nature, opportunity, and culture appeared to have showered every advantage. His abilities were considerable, his ambition greater. Though intensely worldly, he was not devoid of affections. He found refuge in suicide, as many do, from want of imagination. The present was too hard for him, and his future was only a chaotic nebula.

Endymion did not see his sister that evening. She was not made aware of his arrival, and was alone with Mrs. Penruddock, who never left her night or day. The rector took charge of her brother, and had a sofa-bed made for him in the kind man's room. He was never to be alone. Never the whole night did poor Endymion close his eyes ; and he was almost as much agitated about the impending interview with Myra, as about the dark event of terror that had been disclosed to him.

Yet that dreaded interview must take place ; and, about noon, the rector told him that Myra was in the drawing-room alone, and would receive him. He tottered as he crossed the hall ; grief and physical exhaustion had

unmanned him ; his eyes were streaming with tears ; he paused for a moment with his hand upon the door ; he dreaded the anguish of her countenance.

She advanced and embraced him with tenderness ; her face was grave, but not a tear even glistened.

'I have been living in a tragedy for years,' said Myra, in a low, hollow voice ; 'and the catastrophe has now arrived.'

'Oh, my dear father!' exclaimed Endymion ; and he burst into a renewed paroxysm of grief.

'Yes ; he was dear to us, and we were dear to him,' said Myra ; 'but the curtain has fallen. We have to exert ourselves. Energy and self-control were never more necessary to two human beings than to us. Here are his keys ; his papers must be examined by no one but ourselves. There is a terrible ceremony taking place, or impending. When it is all over, we must visit the hall at least once more.'

The whole neighbourhood was full of sorrow for the event, and of sympathy for those bereft. It was universally agreed that

Mr. Ferrars had never recovered the death of his wife ; had never been the same man after it ; had become distrait, absent, wandering in his mind, and the victim of an invincible melancholy. Several instances were given of his inability to manage his affairs. The jury, with Farmer Thornberry for foreman, hesitated not in giving a becoming verdict. In those days information travelled slowly. There were no railroads then, and no telegraphs, and not many clubs. A week elapsed before the sad occurrence was chronicled in a provincial paper, and another week before the report was reproduced in London, and then in an obscure corner of the journal, and in small print. Everything gets about at last, and the world began to stare and talk ; but it passed unnoticed to the sufferers, except by a letter from Zenobia, received at Hurstley after Myra had departed from her kind friends. Zenobia was shocked, nay, overwhelmed, by what she had heard ; wanted to know if she could be of use ; offered to do anything ; begged Myra to come and stay with her in St. James' Square ; and assured her that, if that were not conve-

nient, when her mourning was over Zenobia would present her at court, just the same as if she were her own daughter.

When the fatal keys were used, and the papers of Mr. Ferrars examined, it turned out worse than even Myra, in her darkest prescience, had anticipated. Her father had died absolutely penniless. As executor of his father, the funds settled on his wife had remained under his sole control, and they had entirely disappeared. There was a letter addressed to Myra on this subject. She read it with a pale face, said nothing, and, without showing it to Endymion, destroyed it. There was to be an immediate sale of their effects at the hall. It was calculated that the expenses of the funeral and all the country bills might be defrayed by its proceeds.

'And there will be enough left for me,' said Myra. 'I only want ten pounds; for I have ascertained that there is no part of England where ten pounds will not take me.'

Endymion sighed and nearly wept when she said these things. 'No,' he would add; 'we must never part.'

'That would ensure our common ruin,' said Myra. 'No; I will never embarrass you with a sister. You can only just subsist; for you could not well live in a garret, except at the Rodneys' I see my way,' said Myra; 'I have long meditated over this—I can draw, I can sing, I can speak many tongues: I ought to be able to get food and clothing; I may get something more. And I shall always be content; for I shall always be thinking of you. However humble even my lot, if my will is concentrated on one purpose, it must ultimately effect it. That is my creed,' she said, 'and I hold it fervently. I will stay with these dear people for a little while. They are not exactly the family on which I ought to trespass. But never mind. You will be a great man some day, Endymion, and you will remember the good Penruddocks.'

CHAPTER XXX.

ONE of the most remarkable families that have ever flourished in England were the NEUCHATELS. Their founder was a Swiss, who had established a banking house of high repute in England in the latter part of the eighteenth century, and, irrespective of a powerful domestic connection, had in time pretty well engrossed the largest and best portion of foreign banking business. When the great French Revolution occurred, all the emigrants deposited their jewels and their treasure with the Neuchatels. As the disturbances spread, their example was followed by the alarmed proprietors and capitalists of the rest of Europe; and, independently of their own considerable means, the Neuchatels thus had the command for a quarter of a century, more or less, of adventitious millions. They

were scrupulous and faithful stewards; but they were doubtless repaid for their vigilance, their anxiety, and often their risk, by the opportunities which these rare resources permitted them to enjoy. One of the Neuchatels was a favourite of Mr. Pitt, and assisted the great statesman in his vast financial arrangements. This Neuchatel was a man of large capacity, and thoroughly understood his period. The minister wished to introduce him to public life, would have opened Parliament to him, and no doubt have showered on him honours and titles. But Neuchatel declined these overtures. He was one of those strong minds who will concentrate their energies on one object; without personal vanity, but with a deep-seated pride in the future. He was always preparing for his posterity. Governed by this passion, although he himself would have been content to live for ever in Bishopsgate Street, where he was born, he had become possessed of a vast principality, and which, strange to say, with every advantage of splendour and natural beauty, was not an hour's drive from Whitechapel.

HAINAULT HOUSE had been raised by a British peer in the days when nobles were fond of building Palladian palaces. It was a chief work of Sir William Chambers, and in its style, its beauty, and almost in its dimensions, was a rival of Stowe or Wanstead. It stood in a deer park, and was surrounded by a royal forest. The family that had raised it wore out in the earlier part of this century. It was supposed that the place must be destroyed and dismantled. It was too vast for a citizen, and the locality was no longer sufficiently refined for a conscript father. In this dilemma, Neuchatel stepped in and purchased the whole affair—palace, and park, and deer, and pictures, and halls, and galleries of statue and bust, and furniture, and even wines, and all the farms that remained, and all the seigneurial rights in the royal forest. But he never lived there. Though he spared nothing in the maintenance and the improvement of the domain, except on a Sunday he never visited it, and was never known to sleep under its roof. 'It will be ready for those who come after me,' he would remark, with a modest smile.

Those who came after him were two sons, between whom his millions were divided; and Adrian, the eldest, in addition to his share, was made the lord of Hainault. Adrian had inherited something more, and something more precious, than his father's treasure—a not inferior capacity, united, in his case, with much culture, and with a worldly ambition to which his father was a stranger. So long as that father lived, Adrian had been extremely circumspect. He seemed only devoted to business, and to model his conduct on that of his eminent sire. That father who had recognised with pride and satisfaction his capacity, and who was without jealousy, had initiated his son during his lifetime in all the secrets of his wondrous craft, and had entrusted him with a leading part in their affairs. Adrian had waited in Downing Street on Lord Liverpool, as his father years before had waited on Mr. Pitt.

The elder Neuchatel departed this life a little before the second French Revolution of 1830, which had been so fatal to Mr. Ferrars. Adrian, who had never committed himself in

politics, further than sitting a short time for a reputed Tory borough for which he paid a rent of a thousand a year to the proprietor, but who was known to have been nurtured in the school of Pitt and Wellington, astonished the world by voting for Lord Grey's Reform Bill, and announcing himself as a Liberal. This was a large fish for the new Liberal Treasury to capture; their triumph was great, and they determined to show that they appreciated the power and the influence of their new ally. At the dissolution of 1831, Adrian Neuchatel was a candidate for a popular constituency, and was elected at the head of the poll. His brother, Melchior, was also returned, and a nephew. The Liberals were alarmed by a subscription of fabulous dimensions said to have been collected by the Tories to influence the General Election; and the undoubted contribution of a noble duke was particularly mentioned, which alone appalled the heart of Brooks' The matter was put before Neuchatel, as he entered the club, to which he had been recently elected with acclamation. 'So you are a little frightened,'

he said, with a peculiarly witching smile which he had, half mockery and half good nature; as much as to say, 'I will do what you wish, but I see through you and everybody else.' 'So you are a little frightened. Well; we City men must see what we can do against the dukes. You may put me down for double his amount.'

Adrian purchased a very fine mansion in Portland Place, and took up his residence formally at Hainault. He delighted in the place, and to dwell there in a manner becoming the scene had always been one of his dreams. Now he lived there with unbounded expenditure. He was passionately fond of horses, and even in his father's lifetime had run some at Newmarket in another name. The stables at Hainault had been modelled on those at Chantilly, and were almost as splendid a pile as the mansion itself. They were soon full, and of first-rate animals in their different ways. With his choice teams Adrian could reach Bishopsgate from Hainault, particularly if there were no stoppages in Whitechapel, in much under an hour.

If he had fifty persons in his stables, there were certainly as many in his park and gardens. These latter were most elaborate. It seemed there was nothing that Hainault could not produce: all the fruits and flowers of the tropics. The conservatories and forcing-houses looked, in the distance, like a city of glass. But, after all, the portion of this immense establishment which was most renowned, and perhaps, on the whole, best appreciated, was the establishment of the kitchen. The chief was the greatest celebrity of Europe; and he had no limit to his staff, which he had selected with the utmost scrutiny, maintained with becoming spirit, and winnowed with unceasing vigilance. Every day at Hainault was a banquet. What delighted Adrian was to bring down without notice a troop of friends, conscious they would be received as well as if there had been a preparation of weeks. Sometimes it was a body from the Stock Exchange, sometimes a host from the House of Commons, sometimes a board of directors with whom he had been transacting business in the morning. It

delighted Adrian to see them quaffing his burgundy, and stuffing down his truffles, and his choice pies from Strasbourg, and all the delicate dishes which many of them looked at with wonder, and tasted with timidity. And then he would, with his particular smile, say to a brother bank director whose mouth was full, and who could only answer him with his eyes, 'Business gives one an appetite; eh, Mr. Trodgits?'

Sunday was always a great day at Hainault. The Royal and the Stock Exchanges were both of them always fully represented; and then they often had an opportunity, which they highly appreciated, of seeing and conferring with some public characters, M.P.s of note or promise, and occasionally a secretary of the Treasury, or a privy councillor. 'Turtle makes all men equal,' Adrian would observe. 'Our friend Trodgits seemed a little embarrassed at first, when I introduced him to the Right Honourable; but when they sate next each other at dinner, they soon got on very well.'

On Sunday the guests walked about and

amused themselves. No one was allowed to ride or drive; Mrs. Neuchatel did not like riding and driving on Sundays. 'I see no harm in it,' said Adrian, 'but I like women to have their way about religion. And you may go to the stables and see the horses, and that might take up the morning. And then there are the houses; they will amuse you. For my part, I am for a stroll in the forest;' and then he would lead his companions, after a delightful ramble, to some spot of agrestic charm, and, looking at it with delight, would say, 'Pretty; is not it? But then they say this place is not fashionable. It will do, I think, for us City men.'

Adrian had married, when very young, a lady selected by his father. The selection seemed a good one. She was the daughter of a most eminent banker, and had herself, though that was of slight importance, a large portion. She was a woman of abilities, highly cultivated. Nothing had ever been spared that she should possess every possible accomplishment, and acquire every information and grace that it was desirable to attain. She

was a linguist, a fine musician, no mean artist; and she threw out, if she willed it, the treasures of her well-stored and not unimaginative mind with ease and sometimes eloquence. Her person, without being absolutely beautiful, was interesting. There was even a degree of fascination in her brown velvet eyes. And yet Mrs. Neuchatel was not a contented spirit; and though she appreciated the great qualities of her husband, and viewed him even with reverence as well as affection, she scarcely contributed to his happiness as much as became her. And for this reason. Whether it were the result of physical organisation, or whether it were the satiety which was the consequence of having been born, and bred, and lived for ever, in a society in which wealth was the prime object of existence, and practically the test of excellence, Mrs. Neuchatel had imbibed not merely a contempt for money, but absolutely a hatred of it. The prosperity of her house depressed her. The stables with their fifty grooms, and the grounds with their fifty gardeners, and the daily visit of the head cook to pass the

bill of fare, were incidents and circumstances that made her melancholy. She looked upon the Stock Exchange coming down to dinner as she would on an invasion of the Visigoths, and endured the stiff observations or the cumbrous liveliness of the merchants and bank directors with gloomy grace. Something less material might be anticipated from the members of Parliament. But whether they thought it would please the genius of the place, or whether Adrian selected his friends from those who sympathised with his pursuits, the members of Parliament seemed wonderfully to accord with the general tone of the conversation, or varied it only by indulging in technical talk of their own. Sometimes she would make a desperate effort to change the elements of their society ; something in this way : 'I see M. Arago and M. Mignet have arrived here, Adrian. Do not you think we ought to invite them here ? And then you might ask Mr. Macaulay to meet them. You said you wished to ask Mr. Macaulay.'

In one respect the alliance between Adrian and his wife was not an unfortunate one. A

woman, and a woman of abilities, fastidious, and inclined to be querulous, might safely be counted on as, in general, ensuring for both parties in their union an unsatisfactory and unhappy life. But Adrian, though kind, generous, and indulgent, was so absorbed by his own great affairs, was a man at the same time of so serene a temper and so supreme a will, that the over-refined fantasies of his wife produced not the slightest effect on the course of his life. Adrian Neuchatel was what very few people are—master in his own house. With a rich varnish of graciousness and favour, he never swerved from his purpose; and, though willing to effect all things by smiles and sweet temper, he had none of that morbid sensibility which allows some men to fret over a phrase, to be tortured by a sigh, or to be subdued by a tear.

There had been born of this marriage only one child, the greatest heiress in England. She had been christened, after her father, ADRIANA. She was now about seventeen; and, had she not been endowed with the finest disposition and the sweetest temper in the world, she must have been spoiled, for both her parents idolised her. To see her every

day was for Adrian a reward for all his labours, and in the midst of his greatest affairs he would always snatch a moment to think how he could contribute to her pleasure or her happiness. All that was rare and delightful and beautiful in the world was at her command. There was no limit to the gratification of her wishes. But, alas! this favoured maiden wished for nothing. Her books interested her, and a beautiful nature; but she liked to be alone, or with her mother. She was impressed with the horrible and humiliating conviction, that she was courted and admired only for her wealth.

'What my daughter requires,' said Adrian, as he mused over these domestic contrarieties, 'is a companion of her own age. Her mother is the very worst constant companion she could have. She requires somebody with charm, and yet of a commanding mind; with youthful sympathy, and yet influencing her in the right way. It must be a person of birth and breeding and complete self-respect. I do not want to have any parasites in my house, or affected fine ladies. That would do no good. What I do want is a thing very

difficult to procure. And yet they say everything is to be obtained. At least, I have always thought so, and found it so. I have the greatest opinion of an advertisement in the 'Times.' I got some of my best clerks by advertisements in the 'Times.' If I had consulted friends, there would have been no end of jobbing for such patronage. One could not trust, in such matters, one's own brother. I will draw up an advertisement and insert it in the 'Times,' and have the references to my counting-house. I will think over the wording as I drive to town.' This was the wording :—

ADVERTISEMENT.

A BANKER and his Wife require a Companion for their only child, a young lady whose accomplishments and acquirements are already considerable. The friend that they would wish for her must be of about the same age as herself, and in every other respect their lots will be the same. The person thus desired will be received and treated as a daughter of the house, will be allowed her own suite of apartments, her own servants and equipage. She must be a person of birth, breeding, and entire self-respect; with a mind and experience capable of directing conduct, and with manners which will engage sympathy.—Apply to H. H., 45 Bishopsgate Street Within.

This advertisement met the eye of Myra at Hurstley Rectory about a month after her father's death, and she resolved to answer it. Her reply pleased Mr. Neuchatel. He selected it out of hundreds, and placed himself in communication with Mr. Penruddock. The result was, that Miss Ferrars was to pay a visit to the Neuchatels; and if, on experience, they liked each other, the engagement was to take place.

In the meantime the good rector of Hurstley arrived on the previous evening with his precious charge at Hainault House; and was rewarded for his kind exertions, not only by the prospect of assisting Myra, but by some present experience of a splendid and unusual scene.

CHAPTER XXXI.

'WHAT do you think of her, mamma?' said Adriana, with glistening eyes, as she ran into Mrs. Neuchatel's dressing-room for a moment before dinner.

'I think her manners are perfect,' replied Mrs. Neuchatel; 'and as there can be no doubt, after all we have heard, of her principles, I think we are most fortunate. But what do you think of her, Adriana? For, after all, that is the main question.'

'I think she is divine,' said Adriana; 'but I fear she has no heart.'

'And why? Surely it is early to decide on such a matter as that!'

'When I took her to her room,' said Adriana, 'I suppose I was nervous; but I burst into tears, and threw my arms round her neck and embraced her, but she did not

respond. She touched my forehead with her lips, and withdrew from my embrace.'

'She wished, perhaps, to teach you to control your emotions,' said Mrs. Neuchatel. 'You have known her only an hour, and you could not have done more to your own mother.'

It had been arranged that there should be no visitors to-day; only a nephew and a foreign consul-general, just to break the formality of the meeting. Mr. Neuchatel placed Myra next to himself at the round table, and treated her with marked consideration—cordial but courteous, and easy, with a certain degree of deference. His wife, who piqued herself on her perception of character, threw her brown velvet eyes on her neighbour, Mr. Penruddock, and cross-examined him in mystical whispers. She soon recognised his love of nature; and this allowed her to dissert on the subject, at once sublime and inexhaustible, with copiousness worthy of the theme. When she found he was an entomologist, and that it was not so much mountains as insects which interested him, she shifted her ground, but

treated it with equal felicity. Strange, but nature is never so powerful as in insect life. The white ant can destroy fleets and cities, and the locusts erase a province. And then, how beneficent they are! Man would find it difficult to rival their exploits: the bee, that gives us honey; the worm, that gives us silk; the cochineal, that supplies our manufactures with their most brilliant dye.

Mr. Penruddock did not seem to know much about manufactures, but always recommended his cottagers to keep bees.

'The lime-tree abounds in our village, and there is nothing the bees love more than its blossoms.'

This direct reference to his village led Mrs. Neuchatel to an inquiry as to the state of the poor about Hurstley, and she made the inquiry in a tone of commiseration.

'Oh! we do pretty well,' said Mr. Penruddock.

'But how can a family live on ten or twelve shillings a week?' murmured Mrs. Neuchatel.

'There it is,' said Mr. Penruddock. 'A

family has more than that. With a family the income proportionately increases.'

Mrs. Neuchatel sighed. 'I must say,' she said, 'I cannot help feeling there is something wrong in our present arrangements. When I sit down to dinner every day, with all these dishes, and remember that there are millions who never taste meat, I cannot resist the conviction that it would be better if there were some equal division, and all should have, if not much, at least something.'

'Nonsense, Emily!' said Mr. Neuchatel, who had an organ like Fine-ear, and could catch, when necessary, his wife's most mystical revelations. 'My wife, Mr. Penruddock, is a regular Communist. I hope you are not,' he added, with a smile, turning to Myra.

'I think life would be very insipid,' replied Myra, 'if all our lots were the same.'

When the ladies withdrew, Adriana and Myra walked out together hand-in-hand. Mr. Neuchatel rose and sate next to Mr. Penruddock, and began to talk politics. His reverend guest could not conceal his alarm about the

position of the Church, and spoke of Lord John Russell's appropriation clause with well-bred horror.

'Well, I do not think there is much to be afraid of,' said Mr. Neuchatel. 'This is a liberal age, and you cannot go against it. The people must be educated, and where are the funds to come from? We must all do something, and the Church must contribute its share. You know I am a Liberal, but I am not for any rash courses. I am not at all sorry that Sir Robert Peel gained so much at the last general election. I like parties to be balanced. I am quite content with affairs. My friends, the Liberals, are in office, and, being there, they can do very little. That is the state of things, is it not, Melchior?' he added with a smile to his nephew, who was an M.P. 'A balanced state of parties, and the house of Neuchatel with three votes—that will do. We poor City men get a little attention paid to us now, but before the dissolution three votes went for nothing. Now, shall we go and ask my daughter to give us a song?'

Mrs. Neuchatel accompanied her daughter on the piano, and after a time not merely on the instrument. The organ of both was fine and richly cultivated. It was choice chamber music. Mr. Neuchatel seated himself by Myra. His tone was more than kind, and his manner gentle. 'It is a little awkward the first day,' he said, 'among strangers, but that will wear off. You must bring your mind to feel that this is your home, and we shall all of us do everything in our power to convince you of it. Mr. Penruddock mentioned to me your wish, under present circumstances, to enter as little as possible into society, and this is a very social house. Your feeling is natural, and you will be in this matter entirely your own mistress. We shall always be glad to see you, but if you are not present we shall know and respect the cause. For my own part, I am one of those who would rather cherish affection than indulge grief, but everyone must follow their mood. I hear you have a brother, to whom you are much attached; a twin, too, and they tell me, strongly resembling you. He is in a

public office, I believe? Now, understand this; your brother can come here whenever he likes, without any further invitation. Ask him whenever you please. We shall always be glad to see him. No sort of notice is necessary. This is not a very small house, and we can always manage to find a bed and a cutlet for a friend.'

CHAPTER XXXII.

NOTHING could be more successful than the connection formed between the Neuchatel family and Myra Ferrars. Both parties to the compact were alike satisfied. Myra had 'got out of that hole' which she always hated, and though the new life she had entered was not exactly the one she had mused over, and which was founded on the tradition of her early experience, it was a life of energy and excitement, of splendour and power, with a total absence of petty vexations and miseries, affording neither time nor cause for the wearing chagrin of a monotonous and mediocre existence. But the crowning joy of her emancipation was the prospect it offered of frequent enjoyment of the society of her brother.

With regard to the Neuchatels, they found

in Myra everything they could desire. Mrs. Neuchatel was delighted with a companion who was not the daughter of a banker, and whose schooled intellect not only comprehended all her doctrines, however abstruse or fanciful, but who did not hesitate, if necessary, to controvert or even confute them. As for Adriana, she literally idolised a friend whose proud spirit and clear intelligence were calculated to exercise a strong but salutary influence over her timid and sensitive nature. As for the great banker himself, who really had that faculty of reading character which his wife flattered herself she possessed, he had made up his mind about Myra from the first, both from her correspondence and her conversation. 'She has more common sense than any woman I ever knew, and more,' he would add, 'than most men. If she were not so handsome, people would find it out; but they cannot understand that so beautiful a woman can have a headpiece, that, I really believe, could manage the affairs in Bishopsgate Street.'

In the meantime life at Hainault resumed

its usual course; streams of guests, of all parties, colours, and classes, and even nations. Sometimes Mr. Neuchatel would say, 'I really must have a quiet day that Miss Ferrars may dine with us, and she shall ask her brother. How glad I shall be when she goes into half-mourning! I scarcely catch a glimpse of her.' And all this time his wife and daughter did nothing but quote her, which was still more irritating, for, as he would say, half-grumbling and half-smiling, 'If it had not been for me, she would not have been here.'

At first Adriana would not dine at table without Myra, and insisted on sharing her imprisonment. 'It does not look like a cell,' said Myra, surveying, not without complacency, her beautiful little chamber beautifully lit, with its silken hangings and carved ceiling and bright with books and pictures; 'besides, there is no reason why you should be a prisoner. You have not lost a father, and I hope never will.'

'Amen!' said Adriana; 'that would indeed be the unhappiest day of my life.'

'You cannot be in society too much in

the latter part of the day,' said Myra. 'The mornings should be sacred to ourselves, but for the rest of the hours people are to see and to be seen, and,' she added, 'to like and to be liked.'

Adriana shook her head; 'I do not wish anyone to like me but you.'

'I am sure I shall always like you, and love you,' said Myra, 'but I am equally sure that a great many other people will do the same.'

'It will not be myself that they like or love,' said Adriana with a sigh.

'Now, spare me that vein, dear Adriana; you know I do not like it. It is not agreeable, and I do not think it is true. I believe that women are loved much more for themselves than is supposed. Besides, a woman should be content if she is loved; that is the point; and she is not to inquire how far the accidents of life have contributed to the result. Why should you not be loved for yourself? You have an interesting appearance. I think you very pretty. You have choice accomplishments and agreeable conversation and the sweetest temper in the world. You want a

little self-conceit, my dear. If I were you and admired, I should never think of my fortune.'

'If you were the greatest heiress in the world, Myra, and were married, nobody would suppose for a moment that it was for your fortune.'

'Go down to dinner and smile upon everybody, and tell me about your conquests to-morrow. And say to your dear papa, that as he is so kind as to wish to see me, I will join them after dinner.'

And so, for the first two months, she occasionally appeared in the evening, especially when there was no formal party. Endymion came and visited her every Sunday, but he was also a social recluse, and though he had been presented to Mrs. Neuchatel and her daughter, and been most cordially received by them, it was some considerable time before he made the acquaintance of the great banker.

About September Myra may be said to have formally joined the circle at Hainault. Three months had elapsed since the terrible event, and she felt, irrespective of other considerations, her position hardly justified her, not-

withstanding all the indulgent kindness of the family, in continuing a course of life which she was conscious to them was sometimes an inconvenience and always a disappointment. It was impossible to deny that she was interested and amused by the world which she now witnessed—so energetic, so restless, so various; so full of urgent and pressing life; never thinking of the past and quite heedless of the future, but worshipping an almighty present that sometimes seemed to roll on like the car of Juggernaut. She was much diverted by the gentlemen of the Stock Exchange, so acute, so audacious, and differing so much from the merchants in the style even of their dress, and in the ease, perhaps the too great facility, of their bearing. They called each other by their Christian names, and there were allusions to practical jokes which intimated a life something between a public school and a garrison. On more solemn days there were diplomatists and men in political office; sometimes great musical artists, and occasionally a French actor. But the dinners were always the same; dishes worthy

of the great days of the Bourbons, and wines of rarity and price, which could not ruin Neuchatel, for in many instances the vineyards belonged to himself.

One morning at breakfast, when he rarely encountered them, but it was a holiday in the City, Mr. Neuchatel said, 'There are a few gentlemen coming to dine here to-day whom you know, with one exception. He is a young man, a very nice young fellow. I have seen a good deal of him of late on business in the City, and have taken a fancy to him. He is a foreigner, but he was partly educated in this country and speaks English as well as any of us.'

'Then I suppose he is not a Frenchman,' said Mrs. Neuchatel, 'for they never speak English.'

'I shall not say what he is. You must all find out; I dare say Miss Ferrars will discover him; but, remember, you must all of you pay him great attention, for he is not a common person, I can assure you.'

'You are mysterious, Adrian,' said his wife, 'and quite pique our curiosity.'

'Well, I wish somebody would pique mine,' said the banker. 'These holidays in the City are terrible things. I think I will go after breakfast and look at the new house, and I dare say Miss Ferrars will be kind enough to be my companion.'

Several of the visitors, fortunately for the banker whose time hung rather heavily on his hands, arrived an hour or so before dinner, that they might air themselves in the famous gardens and see some of the new plants. But the guest whom he most wished to greet, and whom the ladies were most curious to welcome, did not arrive. They had all entered the house and the critical moment was at hand, when, just as dinner was about to be announced, the servants ushered in a young man of distinguished appearance, and the banker exclaimed, 'You have arrived just in time to take Mrs. Neuchatel in to dinner,' and he presented to her—Colonel Albert.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE ladies were much interested by Colonel Albert. Mrs. Neuchatel exercised on him all the unrivalled arts by which she so unmistakably discovered character. She threw on him her brown velvet eyes with a subdued yet piercing beam, which would penetrate his most secret and even undeveloped intelligence. She asked questions in a hushed mystical voice, and as the colonel was rather silent and somewhat short in his replies, though ever expressed in a voice of sensibility and with refined deference of manner, Mrs. Neuchatel opened her own peculiar views on a variety of subjects of august interest, such as education, high art, the influence of woman in society, the formation of character, and the distribution of wealth, on all of which this highly gifted lady was always in the habit of

informing her audience, by way of accompaniment, that she was conscious that the views she entertained were peculiar. The views of Mrs. Neuchatel were peculiar, and therefore not always, or even easily, comprehended. That indeed she felt was rather her fate in life, but a superior intelligence like hers has a degree of sublimated self-respect which defies destiny.

When she was alone with the ladies, the bulletin of Mrs. Neuchatel was not so copious as had been expected. She announced that Colonel Albert was sentimental, and she suspected a poet. But for the rest she had discovered nothing, not even his nationality. She had tried him both in French and German, but he persisted in talking English, although he spoke of himself as a foreigner. After dinner he conversed chiefly with the men, particularly with the Governor of the Bank, who seemed to interest him much, and a director of one of the dock companies, who offered to show him over their establishment, an offer which Colonel Albert eagerly accepted. Then, as if he remembered that homage was

due at such a moment to the fairer sex, he went and seated himself by Adriana, and was playful and agreeable, though when she was cross-examined afterwards by her friends as to the character of his conversation, she really could not recall anything particular except that he was fond of horses, and said that he should like very much to take a ride with her. Just before he took his departure, Colonel Albert addressed Myra, and in a rather strange manner. He said, 'I have been puzzling myself all dinner, but I cannot help feeling that we have met before.'

Myra shook her head and said, 'I think that is impossible.'

'Well,' said the colonel with a look a little perplexed and not altogether satisfied, 'I suppose then it was a dream. May dreams so delightful,' and he bowed, 'never be wanting!'

'So you think he is a poet, Emily,' said Mr. Neuchatel when they had all gone. 'We have got a good many of his papers in Bishopsgate Street, but I have not met with any verses in them yet.'

The visit of Colonel Albert was soon repeated, and he became a rather frequent guest at Hainault. It was evident that he was a favourite with Mr. Neuchatel. 'He knows very few people,' he would say, 'and I wish him to make some friends. Poor young fellow! he has had rather a hard life of it, and seen some service for such a youth. He is a perfect gentleman, and if he be a poet, Emily, that is all in your way. You like literary people, and are always begging that I should ask them. Well, next Saturday you will have a sort of a lion,—one of the principal writers in 'Scaramouch.' He is going to Paris as the foreign correspondent of the 'Chuck-Farthing' with a thousand a year, and one of my friends in the Stock Exchange, who is his great ally, asked me to give him some letters. So he came to Bishopsgate Street—they all come to Bishopsgate Street—and I asked him to dine here on Saturday. By the bye, Miss Ferrars, ask your brother to come on the same day and stay with us till Monday. I will take him up to town with me quite in time for his office.'

This was the first time that Endymion had remained at Hainault. He looked forward to the visit with anticipations of great pleasure. Hainault, and all the people there, and everything about it, delighted him, and most of all the happiness of his sister and the consideration, and generosity, and delicate affection with which she was treated. One morning, to his astonishment, Myra had insisted upon his accepting from her no inconsiderable sum of money. 'It is no part of my salary,' she said, when he talked of her necessities. 'Mr. Neuchatel said he gave it to me for outfit and to buy gloves. But being in mourning I want to buy nothing, and you, dear darling, must have many wants. Besides, Mrs. Neuchatel has made me so many presents that I really do not think that I shall ever want to buy anything again.'

It was rather a grand party at Hainault, such as Endymion had little experience of. There was a cabinet minister and his wife, not only an ambassador, but an ambassadress who had been asked to meet them, a nephew Neuchatel, the M.P with a pretty young wife, and

several apparently single gentlemen of note and position. Endymion was nervous when he entered, and more so because Myra was not in the room. But his trepidation was absorbed in his amazement when in the distance he observed St. Barbe, with a very stiff white cravat, and his hair brushed into unnatural order, and his whole demeanour forming a singular contrast to the rollicking cynicism of Joe's and the office.

Mr. Neuchatel presented St. Barbe to the lady of the mansion. 'Here is one of our great wits,' said the banker, 'and he is going to Paris, which is the capital of wits.' The critical moment prevented prolonged conversation, but the lady of the mansion did contrive to convey to St. Barbe her admiring familiarity with some of his effusions, and threw out a phrase which proved how finely she could distinguish between wit and humour.

Endymion at dinner sate between two M.P.s, whom his experience at the House of Commons allowed him to recognise. As he was a young man whom neither of them knew,

neither of them addressed him, but with delicate breeding carried on an active conversation across him, as if in fact he were not present. As Endymion had very little vanity, this did not at all annoy him. On the contrary, he was amused, for they spoke of matters with which he was not unacquainted, though he looked as if he knew or heard nothing. Their conversation was what is called 'shop:' all about the House and office; criticisms on speakers, speculations as to preferment, what Government would do about this, and how well Government got out of that.

Endymion was amused by seeing Myra, who was remote from him, sitting by St. Barbe, who, warmed by the banquet, was evidently holding forth without the slightest conception that his neighbour whom he addressed had long become familiar with his characteristics.

After dinner, St. Barbe pounced upon Endymion. 'Only think of our meeting here!' he said. 'I wonder why they asked you. You are not going to Paris, and you are not a wit. What a family this is!' he

said ; 'I had no idea of wealth before ! Did you observe the silver plates ? I could not hold mine with one hand, it was so heavy. I do not suppose there are such plates in the world. It gives one an idea of the galleons and Anson's plunder. But they deserve their wealth,' he added ; 'nobody grudges it to them. I declare when I was eating that truffle, I felt a glow about my heart that, if it were not indigestion, I think must have been gratitude ; though that is an article I had not believed in. He is a wonderful man, that Neuchatel. If I had only known him a year ago ! I would have dedicated my novel to him. He is a sort of man who would have given you a cheque immediately. He would not have read it to be sure, but what of that ? If you had dedicated it to a lord, the most he would have done would have been to have asked you to dinner, and then perhaps have cut up your work in one of the Quality reviews, and taken money for doing it out of our pockets ! Oh ! it's too horrid ! There are some top-sawyers here to-day, Ferrars ! It would make Seymour Hicks' mouth water to be here. We

should have had it in the papers, and he would have left us out of the list, and called us, etc. Now I dare say that ambassador has been blundering all his life, and yet there is something in that star and ribbon ; I do not know how you feel, but I could almost go down on my knees to him. And there is a cabinet minister ; well, we know what he is ; I have been squibbing him for these two years, and now that I meet him I feel like a snob. Oh ! there is an immense deal of superstition left in the world. I am glad they are going to the ladies. I am to be honoured by some conversation with the mistress of the house. She seems a first-rate woman, familiar with the glorious pages of a certain classic work, and my humble effusions. She praised one she thought I wrote, but between ourselves it was written by that fellow Seymour Hicks, who imitates me ; but I would not put her right, as dinner might have been announced every moment. But she is a great woman, sir,—wonderful eyes ! They are all great women here. I sat next to one of the daughters, or daughters-in-law, or nieces, I suppose.

By Jove! it was tierce and quart. If you had been there, you would have been run through in a moment. I had to show my art. Now they are rising. I should not be surprised if Mr. Neuchatel were to present me to some of the grandees. I believe them to be all impostors, but still it is pleasant to talk to a man with a star.

"Ye stars which are the poetry of heaven,"

Byron wrote; a silly line; he should have written,

"Ye stars which are the poetry of dress."'

CHAPTER XXXIV

St. Barbe was not disappointed in his hopes. It was an evening of glorious success for him. He had even the honour of sitting for a time by the side of Mrs. Neuchatel, and being full of good claret, he, as he phrased it, showed his paces; that is to say, delivered himself of some sarcastic paradoxes duly blended with fulsome flattery. Later in the evening, he contrived to be presented both to the ambassador and the cabinet minister, and treated them as if they were demigods; listened to them as if with an admiration which he vainly endeavoured to repress; never spoke except to enforce and illustrate the views which they had condescended to intimate; successfully conveyed to his excellency that he was conversing with an enthusiast for his exalted profession; and to the

minister that he had met an ardent sympathiser with his noble career. The ambassador was not dissatisfied with the impression he had made on one of the foreign correspondents of the 'Chuck-Farthing,' and the minister flattered himself that both the literary and the graphic representations of himself in 'Scaramouch' might possibly for the future be mitigated.

'I have done business to-night,' said St. Barbe to Endymion towards the close of the evening. 'You did not know I had left the old shop? I kept it close. I could stand it no longer. One has energies, sir, though not recognised—at least not recognised much,' he added thoughtfully. 'But who knows what may happen? The age of mediocrity is not eternal. You see this thing offered, and I saw an opening. It has come already. You saw the big wigs all talking to me? I shall go to Paris now with some éclat. I shall invent a new profession; the literary diplomatist. The bore is, I know nothing about foreign politics. My line has been the other way. Never mind; I will read the "Débats"

and the "Revue des Deux Mondes," and make out something. Foreign affairs are all the future, and my views may be as right as anybody else's; probably more correct, not so conventional. What a fool I was, Ferrars! I was asked to remain here to-night and refused! The truth is, I could not stand those powdered gentlemen, and I should have been under their care. They seem so haughty and supercilious. And yet I was wrong. I spoke to one of them very rudely just now, when he was handing coffee, to show I was not afraid, and he answered me like a seraph. I felt remorse.'

'Well, I have made the acquaintance of Mr. St. Barbe,' said Myra to Endymion. 'Strange as he is, he seemed quite familiar to me, and he was so full of himself that he never found me out. I hope some day to know Mr. Trenchard and Mr. Waldershare. Those I look upon as your chief friends.'

On the following afternoon, Adriana, Myra, and Endymion took a long walk together in the forest. The green glades in the autumnal woods were inviting, and sometimes

they stood before the vast form of some doddered oak. The air was fresh and the sun was bright. Adriana was always gay and happy in the company of her adored Myra, and her happiness and her gaiety were not diminished by the presence of Myra's brother. So it was a lively and pleasant walk.

At the end of a long glade they observed a horseman followed by a groom approaching them. Endymion was some little way behind, gathering wild flowers for Adriana. Cantering along, the cavalier soon reached them, and then he suddenly pulled up his horse. It was Colonel Albert.

'You are walking, ladies? Permit me to join you,' and he was by their side. 'I delight in forests and in green alleys,' said Colonel Albert. 'Two wandering nymphs make the scene perfect.'

'We are not alone,' said Adriana, 'but our guardian is picking some wild flowers for us, which we fancied. I think it is time to return. You are going to Hainault, I believe, Colonel Albert, so we can all walk home together.'

So they turned, and Endymion with his graceful offering in a moment met them. Full of his successful quest, he offered with eager triumph the flowers to Adriana, without casting a glance at her new companion.

'Beautiful!' exclaimed Adriana, and she stopped to admire and arrange them. 'See, dear Myra, is not this lovely? How superior to anything in our glass-houses!'

Myra took the flower and examined it. Colonel Albert, who was silent, was watching all this time Endymion with intentness, who now looked up and encountered the gaze of the new comer. Their eyes met, their countenances were agitated, they seemed perplexed, and then it seemed that at the same time both extended their hands.

'It is a long time since we met,' said Colonel Albert, and he retained the hand of Endymion with affection. But Endymion, who was apparently much moved, said nothing, or rather only murmured an echo to the remarks of his new friend. And then they all walked on, but Myra fell a little back and made a signal to Endymion to join her.

'You never told me, darling, that you knew Colonel Albert.'

'Colonel Albert!' said Endymion, looking amazed, and then he added, 'Who is Colonel Albert?'

'That gentleman before us,' said Myra.

'That is the Count of Otranto, whose fag I was at Eton.'

'The Count of Otranto!'

CHAPTER XXXV

Colonel Albert from this day became an object of increased and deeper interest to Myra. His appearance and manners had always been attractive, and the mystery connected with him was not calculated to diminish curiosity in his conduct or fate. But when she discovered that he was the unseen hero of her childhood, the being who had been kind to her Endymion in what she had ever considered the severest trial of her brother's life, had been his protector from those who would have oppressed him, and had cherished him in the desolate hour of his delicate and tender boyhood, her heart was disturbed. How often had they talked together of the Count of Otranto, and how often had they wondered who he was! His memory had been a delightful mystery to them in their Berkshire

solitude, and Myra recalled with a secret smile the numberless and ingenious inquiries by which she had endeavoured to elicit from her brother some clue as to his friend, or to discover some detail which might guide her to a conclusion. Endymion had known nothing, and was clear always that the Count of Otranto must have been, and was, an English boy. And now the Count of Otranto called himself Colonel Albert, and, though he persisted in speaking English, had admitted to Mrs. Neuchatel that he was a foreigner.

Who was he? She resolved, when she had an opportunity, to speak to the great banker on the subject.

'Do you know, Mr. Neuchatel,' she said, 'that Endymion, my brother, was at school with Colonel Albert?'

'Ah, ah!' said Mr. Neuchatel.

'But when he was at school he had another name,' said Myra.

'Oh, oh!' said Mr. Neuchatel.

'He was then called the Count of Otranto.'

'That is a very pretty name,' said Mr. Neuchatel.

'But why did he change it?' asked Myra.

'The great world often change their names,' said Mr. Neuchatel. 'It is only poor City men like myself who are always called Mr., and bear the same name as their fathers.'

'But when a person is called a count when he is a boy, he is seldom called only a colonel when he is a man,' said Myra. 'There is a great mystery in all this.'

'I should not be surprised,' said Mr. Neuchatel, 'if he were to change his name again before this time year.'

'Why?' asked Myra.

'Well, when I have read all his papers in Bishopsgate Street, perhaps I shall be able to tell you,' said Mr. Neuchatel, and Myra felt that she could pursue the theme no further.

She expected that Endymion would in time be able to obtain this information, but it was not so. In their first private conversation after their meeting in the forest, Endymion had informed Colonel Albert that, though they had met now for the first time since his return, they had been for some time

lodgers in London under the same roof. Colonel Albert smiled when Endymion told him this; then falling into thought, he said: 'I hope we may often meet, but for the moment it may be as well that the past should be known only to ourselves. I wish my life for the present to be as private as I can arrange it. There is no reason why we should not be sometimes together—that is, when you have leisure. I had the pleasure of making your acquaintance at my banker's.'

Parliament had been dissolved through the demise of the crown in the summer of this year (1837), and London society had been prematurely broken up. Waldershare had left town early in July to secure his election, in which he was successful, with no intention of settling again in his old haunts till the meeting of the new House of Commons, which was to be in November. The Rodneys were away at some Kentish watering-place during August and September, exhibiting to an admiring world their exquisitely made dresses, and enjoying themselves amazingly at balls and assemblies at the public rooms.

The resources of private society also were not closed to them. Mr. and Mrs. Gamme were also there and gave immense dinners, and the airy Mrs. Hooghley, who laughed a little at the Gammes' substantial gatherings and herself improvised charming pic-nics. So there was really little embarrassment in the social relations between Colonel Albert and Endymion. They resolved themselves chiefly into arranging joint expeditions to Hainault. Endymion had a perpetual invitation there, and it seemed that the transactions between Mr. Neuchatel and the colonel required much conference, for the banker always expected him, although it was well known that they met not unfrequently in Bishopsgate Street in the course of the week. Colonel Albert and Endymion always stayed at Hainault from Saturday till Monday. It delighted the colonel to mount Endymion on one of his choice steeds, and his former fag enjoyed all this amazingly.

Colonel Albert became domiciled at Hainault. The rooms which were occupied by him when there were always reserved for him.

He had a general invitation, and might leave his luggage and books and papers behind him. It was evident that the family pleased him. Between Mr. Neuchatel and himself there were obviously affairs of great interest; but it was equally clear that he liked the female members of the family—all of them; and all liked him. And yet it cannot be said that he was entertaining, but there are some silent people who are more interesting than the best talkers. And when he did speak he always said the right thing. His manners were tender and gentle; he had an unobtrusive sympathy with all they said or did, except, indeed, and that was not rarely, when he was lost in profound abstraction.

'I delight in your friend the colonel, Adrian,' said Mrs. Neuchatel, 'but I must say he is very absent.'

'He has a good deal to think about,' said Mr. Neuchatel.

'I wonder what it can be,' thought Myra.

'He has a claim to a great estate,' said Mr. Neuchatel, 'and he has to think of the best mode of establishing it; and he has been

deprived of great honours, and he believes unjustly, and he wishes to regain them.'

'No wonder, then, he is absent,' said Mrs. Neuchatel. 'If he only knew what a burthen great wealth is, I am sure he would not wish to possess it, and as for honours I never could make out why having a title or a ribbon could make any difference in a human being.'

'Nonsense, my dear Emily,' said Mr. Neuchatel. 'Great wealth is a great blessing to a man who knows what to do with it, and as for honours, they are inestimable to the honourable.'

'Well, I ardently hope Colonel Albert may succeed,' said Myra, 'because he was so kind to my brother at Eton. He must have a good heart.'

'They say he is the most unscrupulous of living men,' said Mr. Neuchatel, with his peculiar smile.

'Good heavens!' exclaimed Mrs. Neuchatel.

'How terrible!' said Adriana. 'It cannot be true.'

'Perhaps he is the most determined,' said Myra. 'Moral courage is the rarest of qualities, and often maligned.'

'Well, he has got a champion,' said Mr. Neuchatel.

'I ardently wish him success,' said Myra, 'in all his undertakings. I only wish I knew what they were.'

'Has not he told your brother, Miss Ferrars?' asked Mr. Neuchatel, with laughing eyes.

'He never speaks of himself to Endymion,' said Myra.

'He speaks a good deal of himself to me,' said Mr. Neuchatel; 'and he is going to bring a friend here to-morrow who knows more about his affairs even than I do. So you will have a very good opportunity, Miss Ferrars, of making yourself acquainted with them, particularly if you sit next to him at dinner, and are very winning.'

The friend of Colonel Albert was Baron Sergius, the baron who used to visit him in London at twilight in a dark brougham. Mrs. Neuchatel was greatly taken by his

appearance, by the calmness of his mien, his unstudied politeness, and his measured voice. He conversed with her entirely at dinner on German philosophy, of which he seemed a complete master, explained to her the different schools, and probably the successful ones, and imparted to her that precise knowledge which she required on the subject, and which she had otherwise been unable to obtain. It seemed, too, that he personally knew all the famous professors, and he intimated their doctrines not only with profound criticism, but described their persons and habits with vividness and picturesque power, never, however, all this time, by any chance raising his voice, the tones of which were ever distinct and a little precise.

'Is this the first visit of your friend to this country?' asked Myra of Colonel Albert.

'Oh, no; he has been here often—and everywhere,' added Colonel Albert.

'Everywhere! he must be a most interesting companion then.'

'I find him so: I never knew anyone

whom I thought equal to him. But perhaps I am not an impartial judge, for I have known him so long and so intimately. In fact, I have never been out of his sight till I was brought over to this country to be placed at Eton. He is the counsellor of our family, and we all of us have ever agreed that if his advice had been always followed we should never have had a calamity.'

'Indeed a gifted person! Is he a soldier?'

'No; Baron Sergius has not followed the profession of arms.'

'He looks a diplomatist.'

'Well, he is now nothing but my friend,' said the colonel. 'He might have been anything, but he is a peculiarly domestic character, and is devoted to private life.'

'You are fortunate in such a friend.'

'Well, I am glad to be fortunate in something,' said Colonel Albert.

'And are you not fortunate in everything?'

'I have not that reputation; but I shall

be more than fortunate if I have your kind wishes.'

'That you have,' said Myra, rather eagerly. 'My brother taught me, even as a child, to wish nothing but good for you. I wish I knew only what I was to wish for.'

'Wish that my plans may succeed,' said Colonel Albert, looking round to her with interest.

'I will more than wish,' said Myra; 'I will believe that they will succeed, because I think you have resolved to succeed.'

'I shall tell Endymion when I see him,' said Colonel Albert, 'that his sister is the only person who has read my character.'

CHAPTER XXXVI.

Colonel Albert and Baron Sergius drove up in their landau from Hainault while Endymion was at the door in Warwick Street, returning home. The colonel saluted him cordially, and said, 'The baron is going to take a cup of coffee with me; join us.' So they went upstairs. There was a packet on the table, which seemed to catch the colonel's eye immediately, and he at once opened it with eagerness. It contained many foreign newspapers. Without waiting for the servant who was about to bring candles, the colonel lighted a taper on the table with a lucifer, and then withdrew into the adjoining chamber, opening, however, with folding doors to the principal and spacious apartment.

'A foreign newspaper always interests our friend,' said the baron, taking his coffee.

'Well, it must always be interesting to have news from home, I suppose,' said Endymion.

'Home!' said the baron. 'News is always interesting, whether it come from home or not.'

'To public men,' said Endymion, sipping his coffee.

'To all men if they be wise,' said the baron; 'as a general rule, the most successful man in life is the man who has the best information.'

'But what a rare thing is success in life!' said Endymion. 'I often wonder whether I shall ever be able to step out of the crowd.'

'You may have success in life without stepping out of the crowd,' said the baron.

'A sort of success,' said Endymion; 'I know what you mean. But what I mean is real success in life. I mean, I should like to be a public man.'

'Why?' asked the baron.

'Well, I should like to have power,' said Endymion, blushing.

'The most powerful men are not public

men,' said the baron. 'A public man is responsible, and a responsible man is a slave. It is private life that governs the world. You will find this out some day. The world talks much of powerful sovereigns and great ministers; and if being talked about made one powerful, they would be irresistible. But the fact is, the more you are talked about the less powerful you are.'

'But surely King Luitbrand is a powerful monarch; they say he is the wisest of men. And the Emperor Harold, who has succeeded in everything. And as for ministers, who is a great man if it be not Prince Wenceslaus?'

'King Luitbrand is governed by his doctor, who is capable of governing Europe, but has no ambition that way; the Emperor Harold is directed by his mistress, who is a woman of a certain age with a vast sagacity, but who also believes in sorcery; and as for Prince Wenceslaus, he is inspired by an individual as obscure as ourselves, and who, for aught I know, may be, at this moment, like ourselves, drinking a cup of coffee in a hired lodging.'

'What you say about public life amazes me,' said Endymion musingly.

'Think over it,' said the baron. 'As an Englishman, you will have difficulty in avoiding public life. But at any rate do not at present be discontented that you are unknown. It is the first condition of real power. When you have succeeded in life according to your views, and I am inclined to believe you will so succeed, you will, some day, sigh for real power, and denounce the time when you became a public man, and belonged to anyone but yourself. But our friend calls me. He has found something startling. I will venture to say, if there be anything in it, it has been brought about by some individual of whom you never heard.'

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

LONDON: PRINTED BY
SPOTTISWOODE AND CO., NEW-STREET SQUARE
AND PARLIAMENT STREET